

Town of Laurel

DSHA Technical Assistance for Housing and Land Use Reform

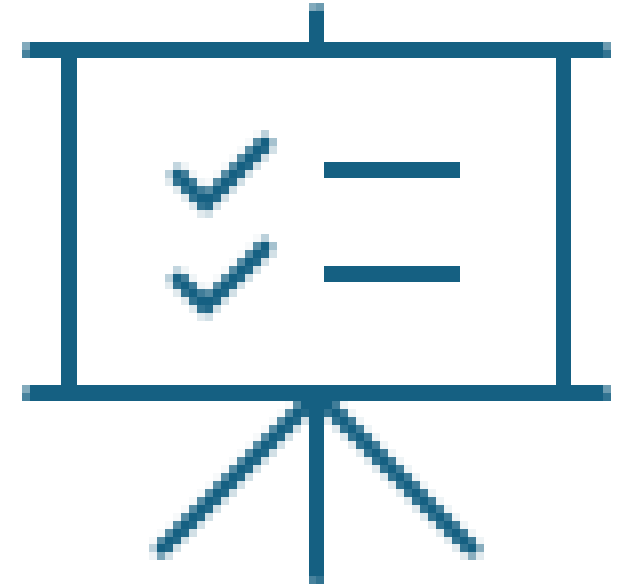
Public Workshop

October 13, 2026

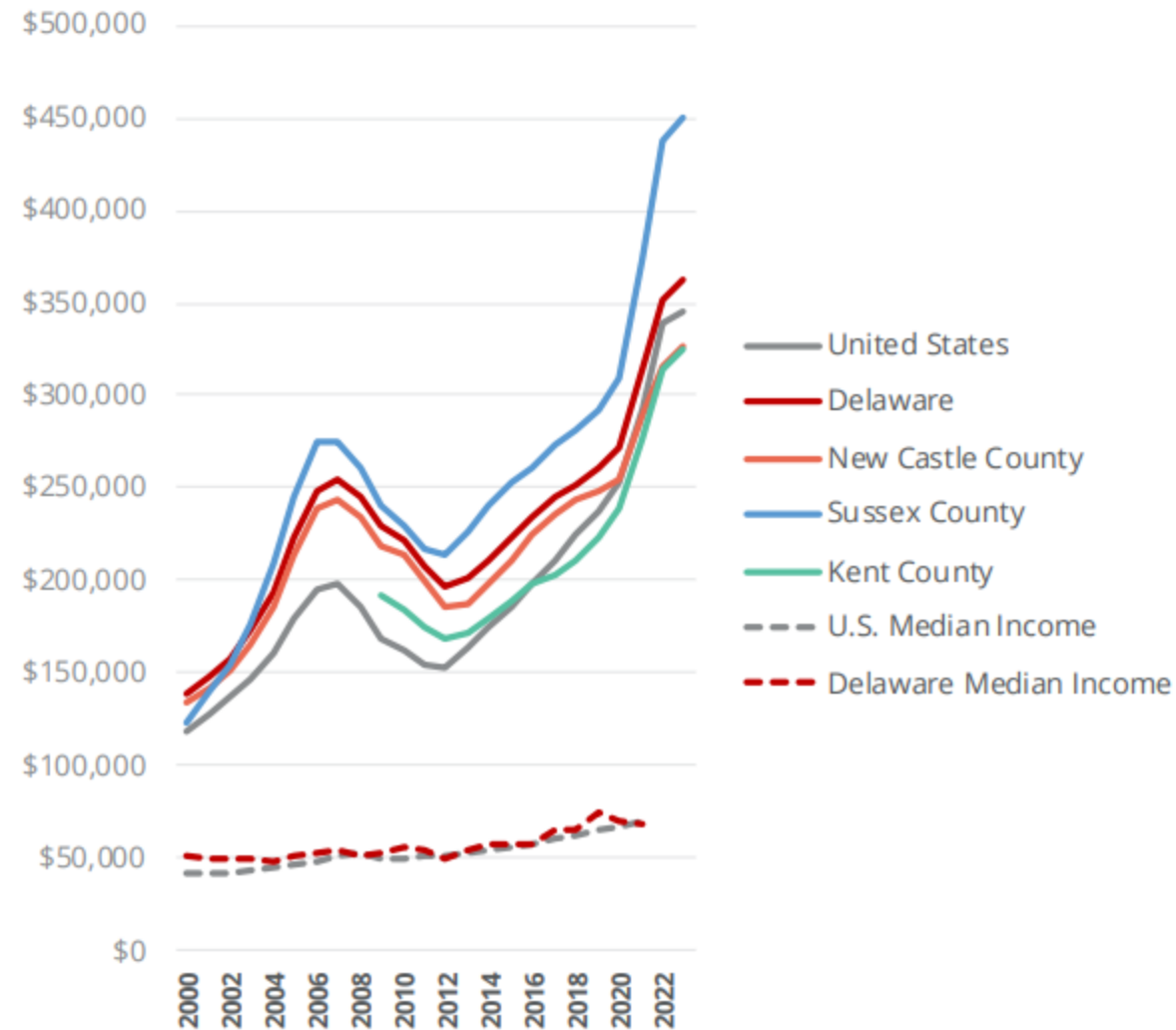


Agenda

- Project Background
- Reforms
 - ADUs
 - Pre-Reviewed Design Plans
 - Missing Middle Housing & Bulk Standards
 - Mixed Use
 - Development Review Process
- Lego Exercise
- Debrief



Typical Home Value and Median Income, Delaware, 2000-2023



Note: Data for 2023 represents the typical home value for January through June.

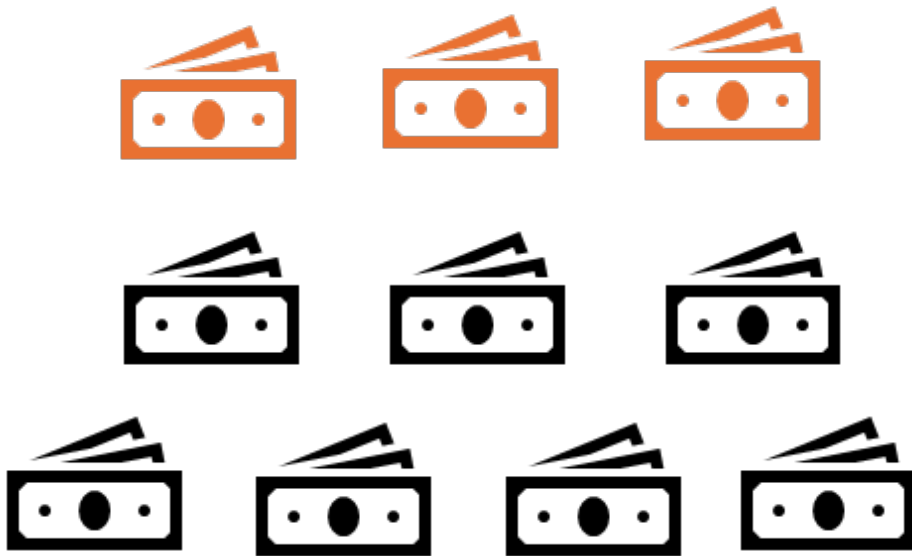
Source: Zillow Home Value Index, Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, and Root Policy Research.

How have housing costs changed over time compared to income?

Key Terms

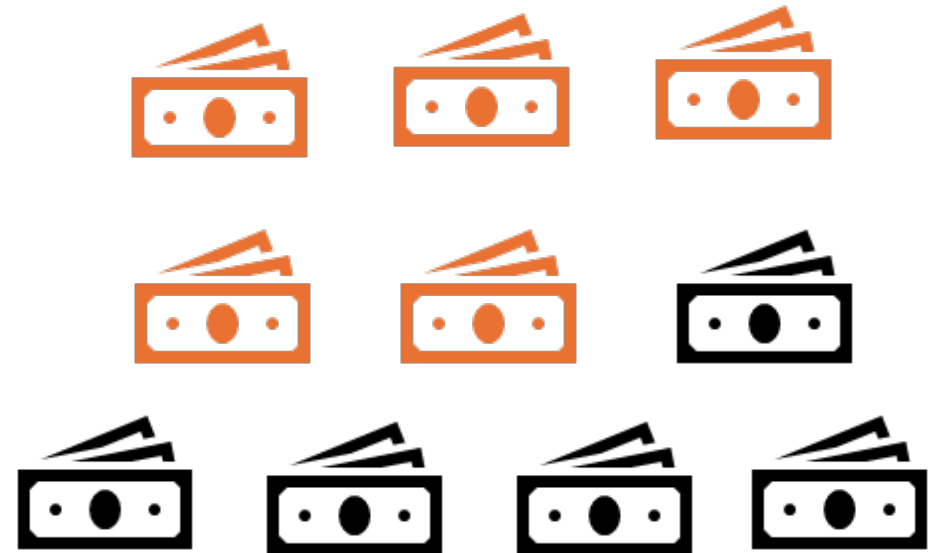
Housing Cost Burden

Spending **more than 30%** of household income on housing costs

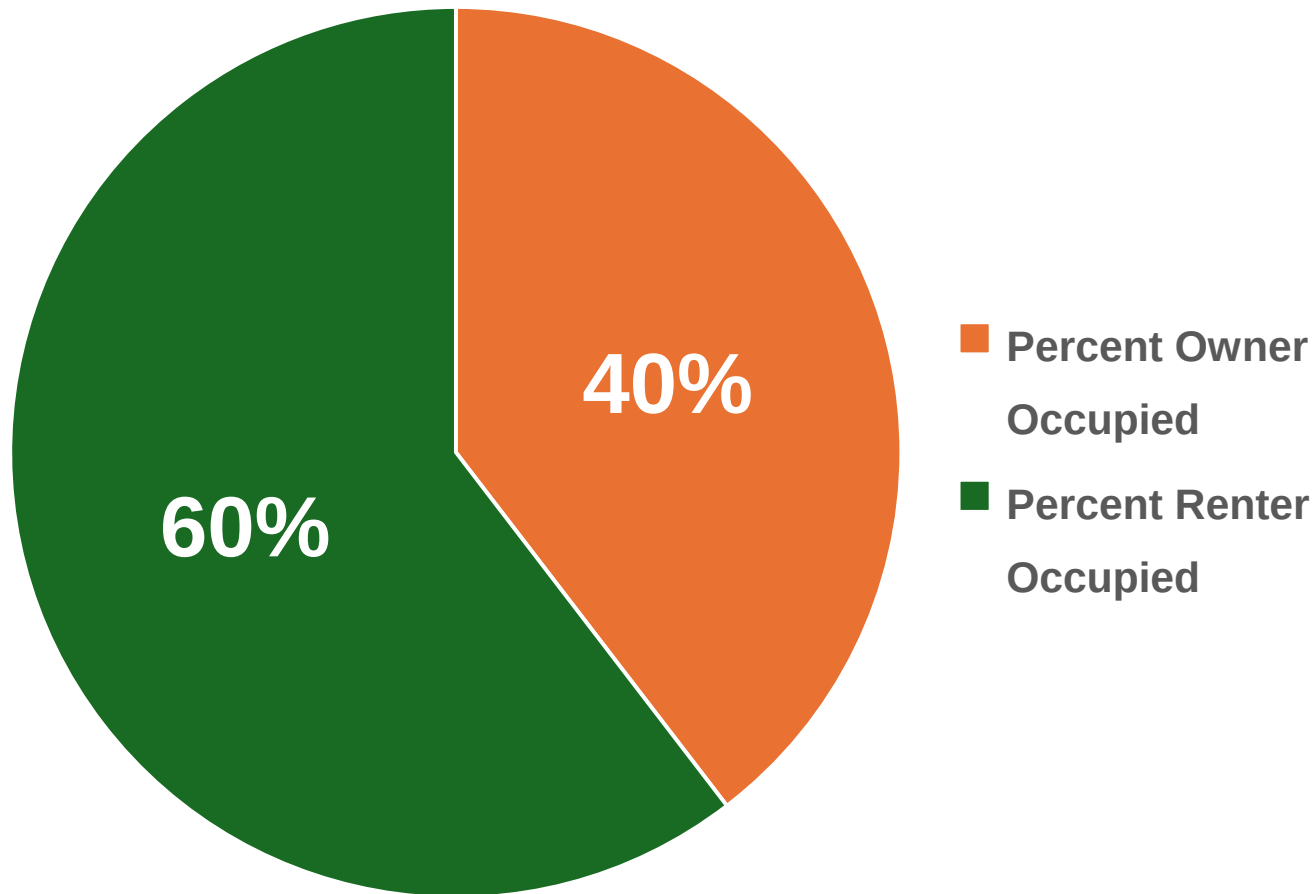


Severe Housing Cost Burden

Spending **more than 50%** of household income on housing costs



Owner and Renter Occupancy in Laurel



- Per 2024 ACS data, there are 1,710 housing units in Laurel, 1,609 of which are occupied
- According to the 2018 Comp Plan, there are 427 subsidized housing units (~27% of housing units)

Background



In response to Delaware's housing affordability crisis, the General Assembly passed [House Bill 442](#), creating the Affordable Housing Production Task Force.



The Affordable Housing Production Task Force released a [report](#) which recommended implementing zoning reform to allow more housing choices at a local level.

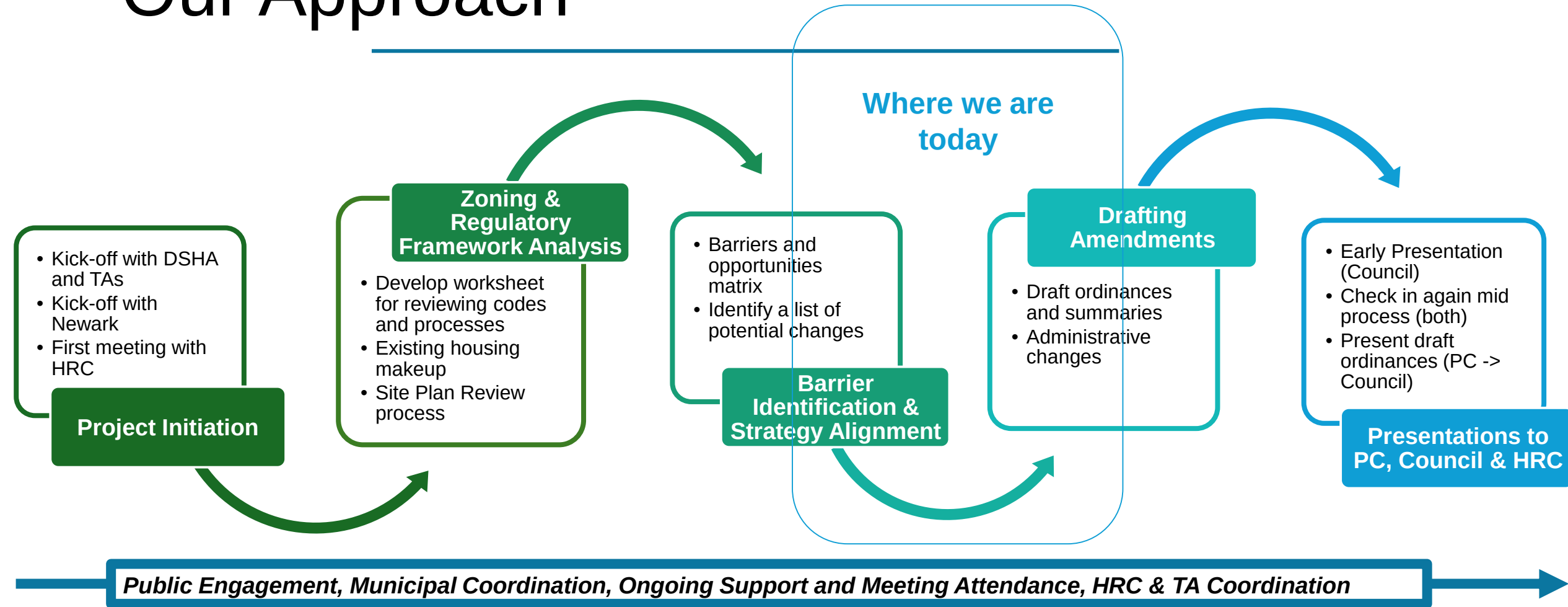


The General Assembly passed [Senate Joint Resolution 8](#) (SJR8), directing the DSHA to create a pilot program to provide technical assistance for municipal governments related to zoning reform.



DSHA opened an application process for municipalities to participate in this [pilot program](#) where they could select zoning reform options and Laurel applied to participate.

Our Approach



HRC = Housing Resources Committee

Chosen Reform

- **Allow ADUs and/or “missing middle” housing types as permitted in residential zones**

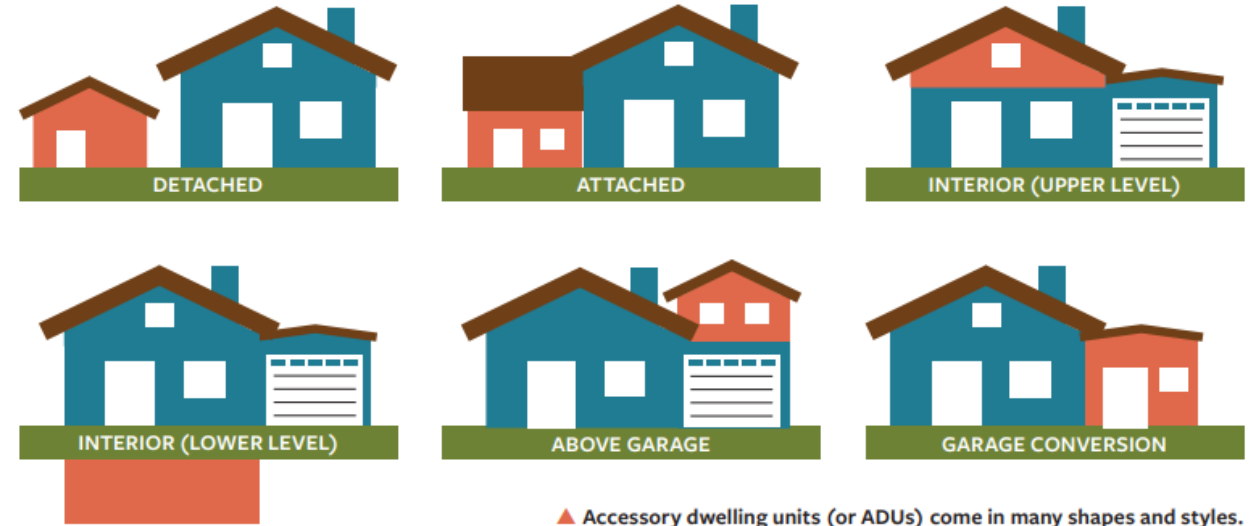
Additional Reforms Available

- Allow manufactured and/or modular homes placed on permanent foundations as a permitted use where single-family detached homes are permitted
- Create pre-reviewed design plans for “missing middle” housing types
- Increase buildable density for housing by reducing minimum lot sizes and bulk standards
- Increase building heights for multifamily housing and/or mixed-use developments
- Establish an inclusionary zoning program to address affordable and workforce housing needs
- Allow higher density, mixed-use with residential in commercial zones or employment centers
- Reduce parking requirements in areas zoned for residential and mixed-use to promote walkable communities and provide more affordable development opportunities



ADUs: Accessory Dwelling Units

- Small scale housing, expand housing choices without substantially changing neighborhood character
- Allow flexibility to accommodate family members, caregivers, rental income
- Can support aging in place, intergenerational neighborhoods



ADUs: Considerations

- How many ADUs should be permitted per lot?
- What types of ADUs should be permitted?
- Should the Town require owner occupancy of either unit?
- Should there be parking requirements for ADUs?

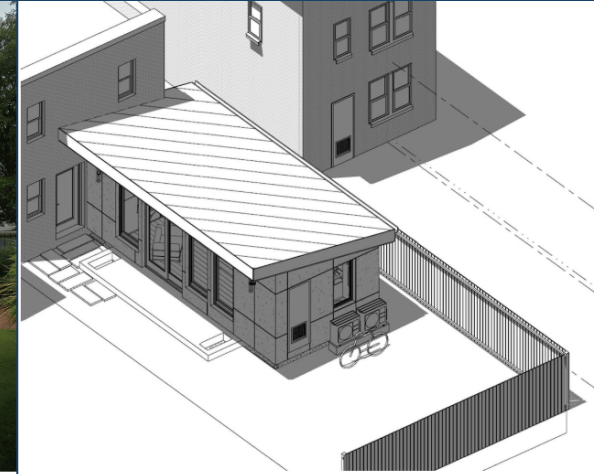


Pre-Reviewed Design Plans

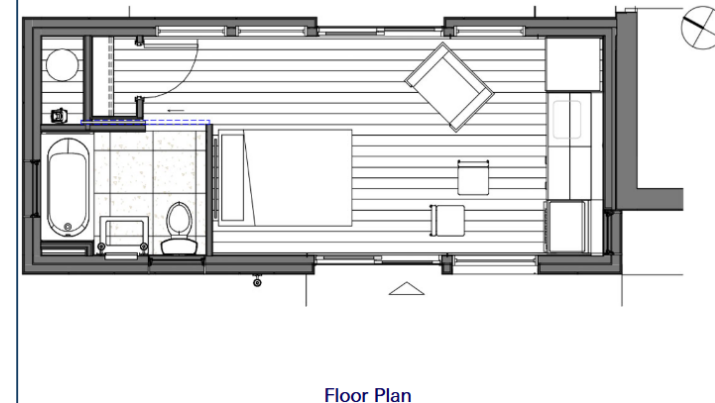
- Not initially chosen by City
- They are **reusable sets of designs** and blueprints that are already approved by local governments and available to developers for free.
- They can **reduce unpredictability** and shorten the approval process for developers.
- They can also help the Town control what kinds of housing are built, ex. only allowing ADUs if they are built according to one of the design plans.



Exterior Rendering



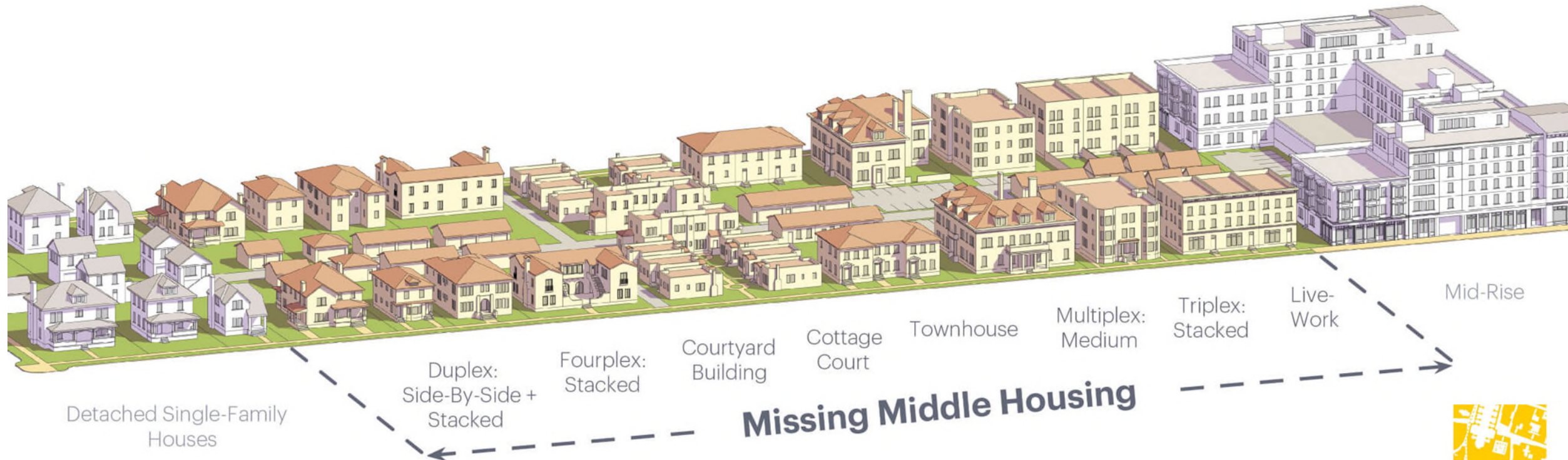
Axonometric Drawing



Floor Plan

Source: ADU For You Pre-Approved Plan Library, New York City

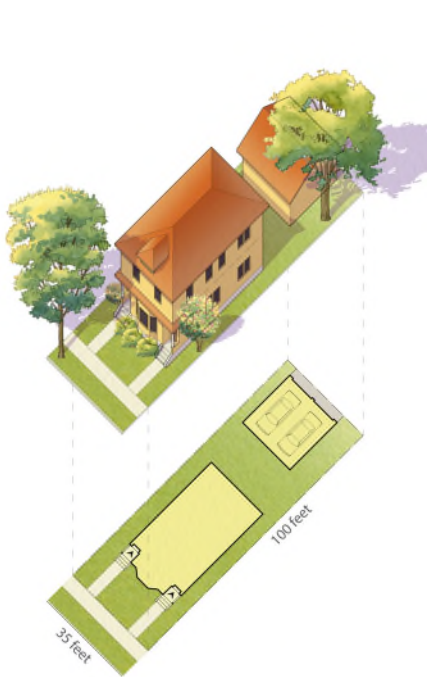
Missing Middle



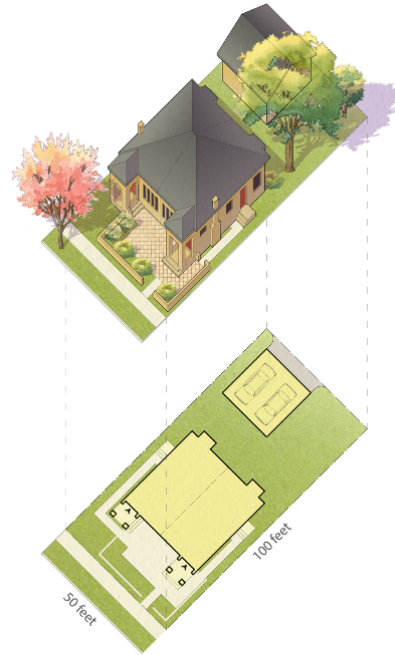
Some types of Missing Middle Housing

We looked at:

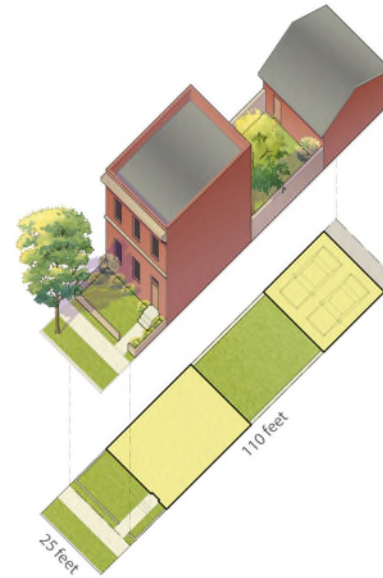
- Which zones permit these housing types?
- What are the lot area and setback requirements in those zones?



Stacked Duplex



Side-by-Side Duplex

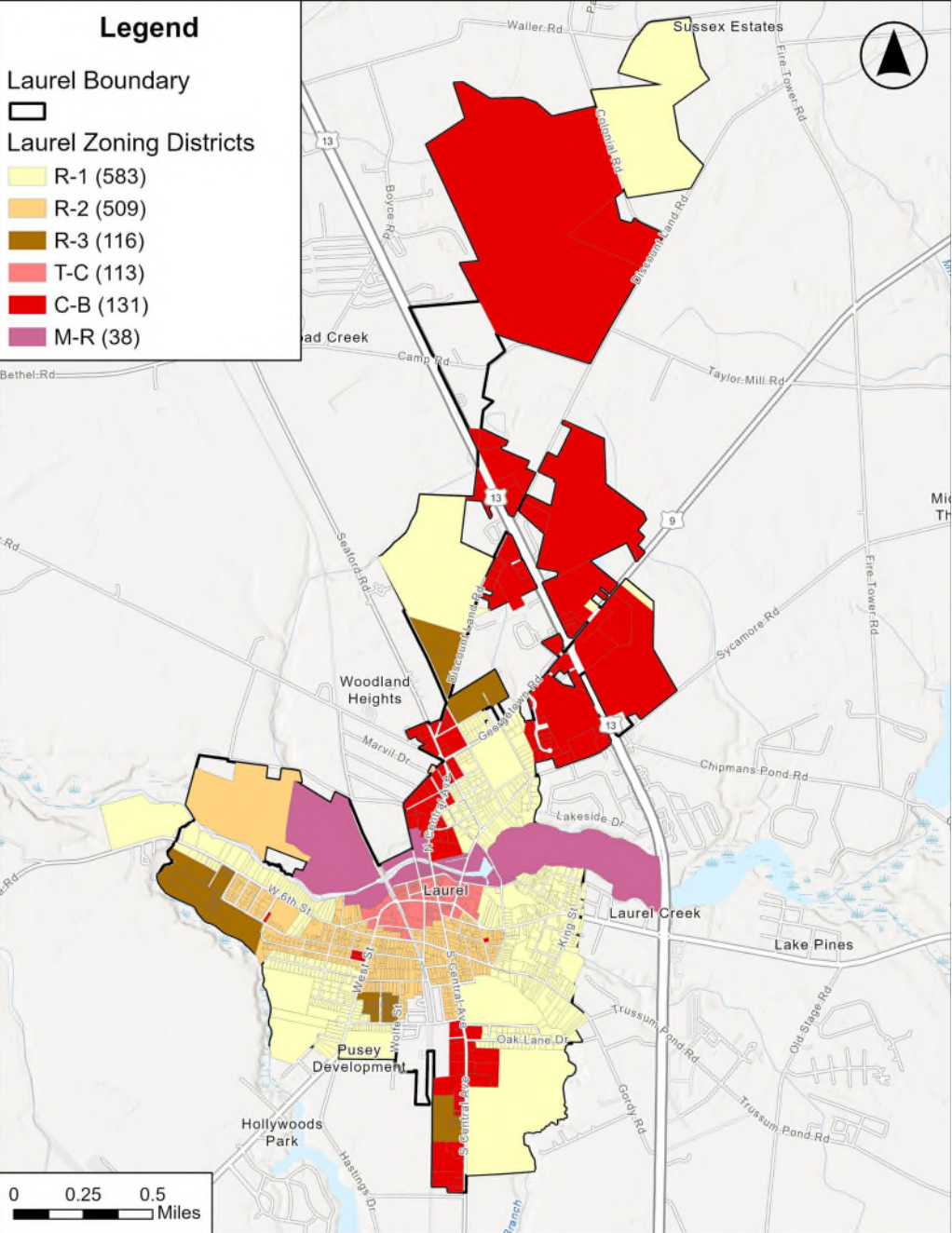


Townhouse

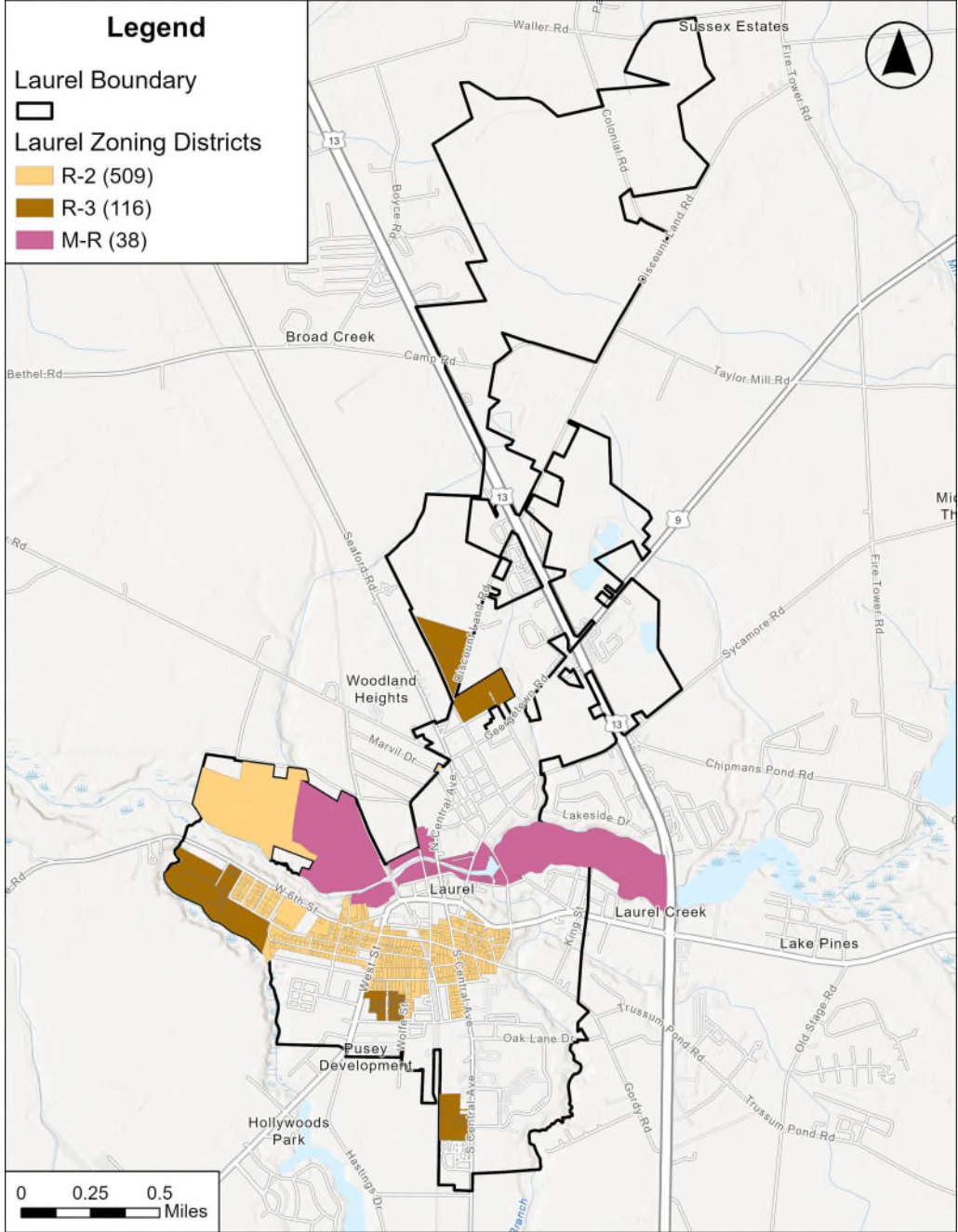


Multifamily

Zones permitting residential uses



Zones permitting townhouses and/or duplexes



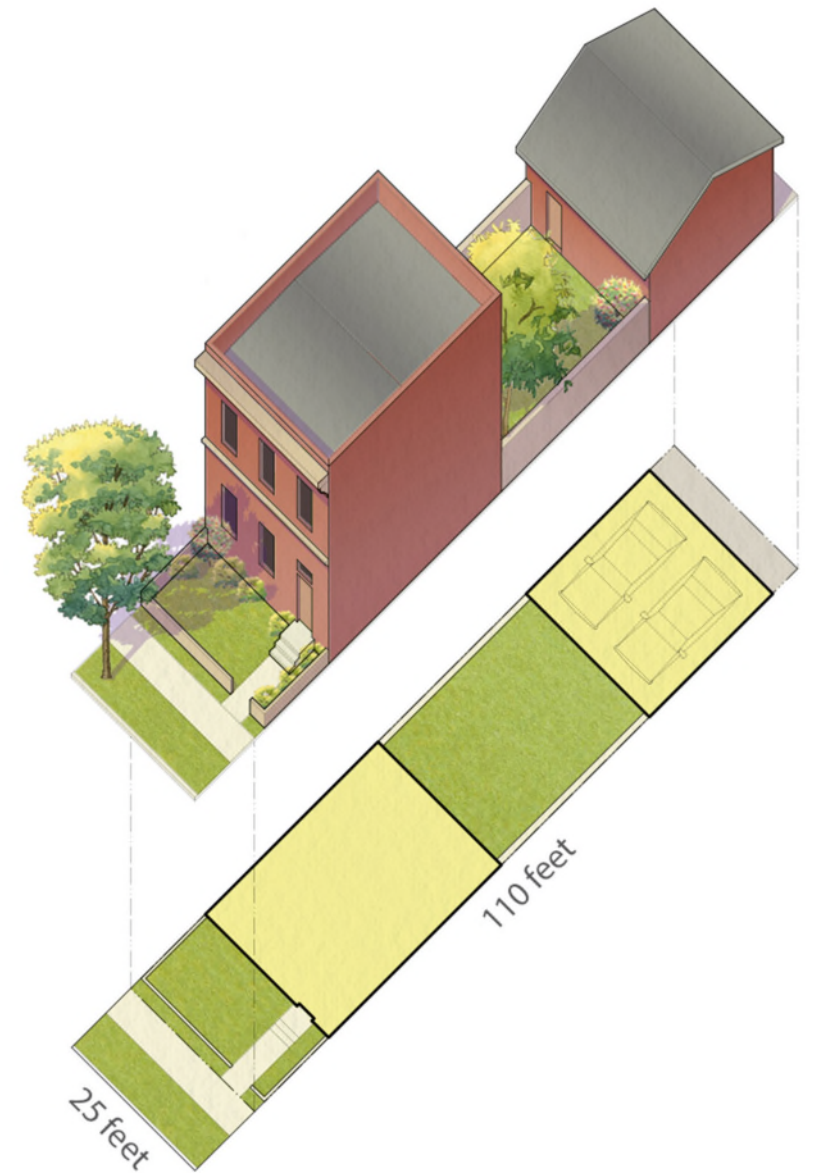
Townhouses: Minimum Lot Sizes

**Missing Middle Recommended
Minimum Lot Size:** 2,750 sq. ft. for
alley-loaded townhouse (see right)

Current Laurel R2 and R3: 4,000 sq. ft.

Current Laurel MR: 7,500 sq. ft.

**Current Laurel LPD-OD for Single-
Family Attached:** 2,500 sq. ft.



Duplexes: Minimum Lot Sizes

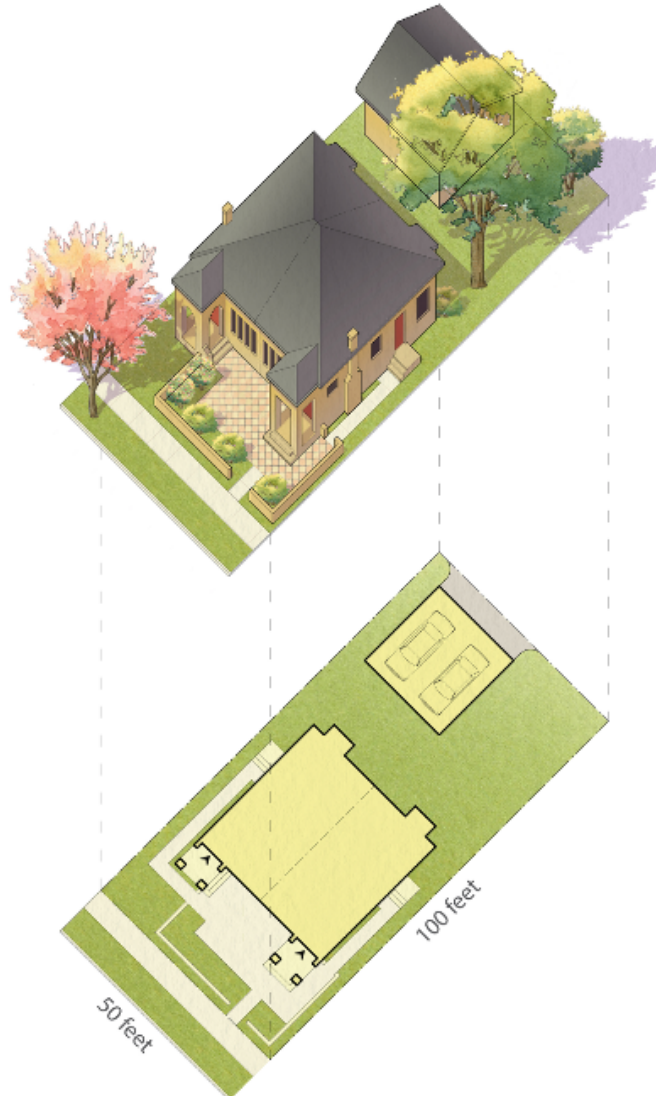
**Missing Middle Alley
Loaded: 2,500 sq. ft.**

**Missing Middle Front
Loaded: 3,025 sq. ft.**

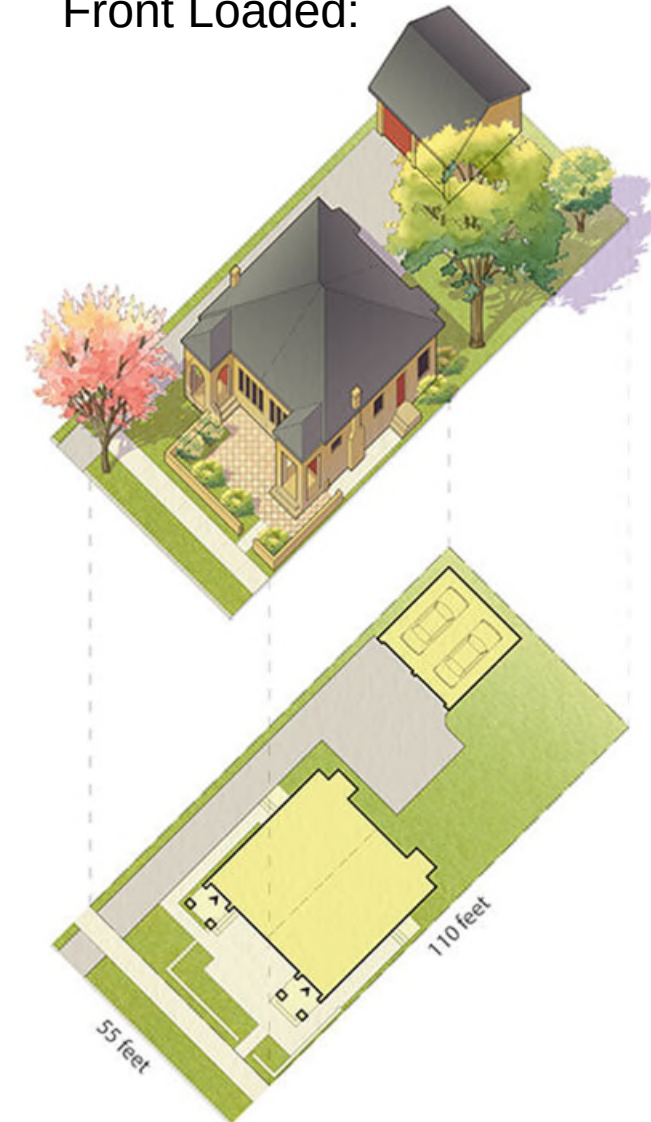
**Current Laurel R2 and
R3: 4,000 sq. ft.**

**Current Laurel LPD-OD
for semi-detached:
3,000 sq. ft.**

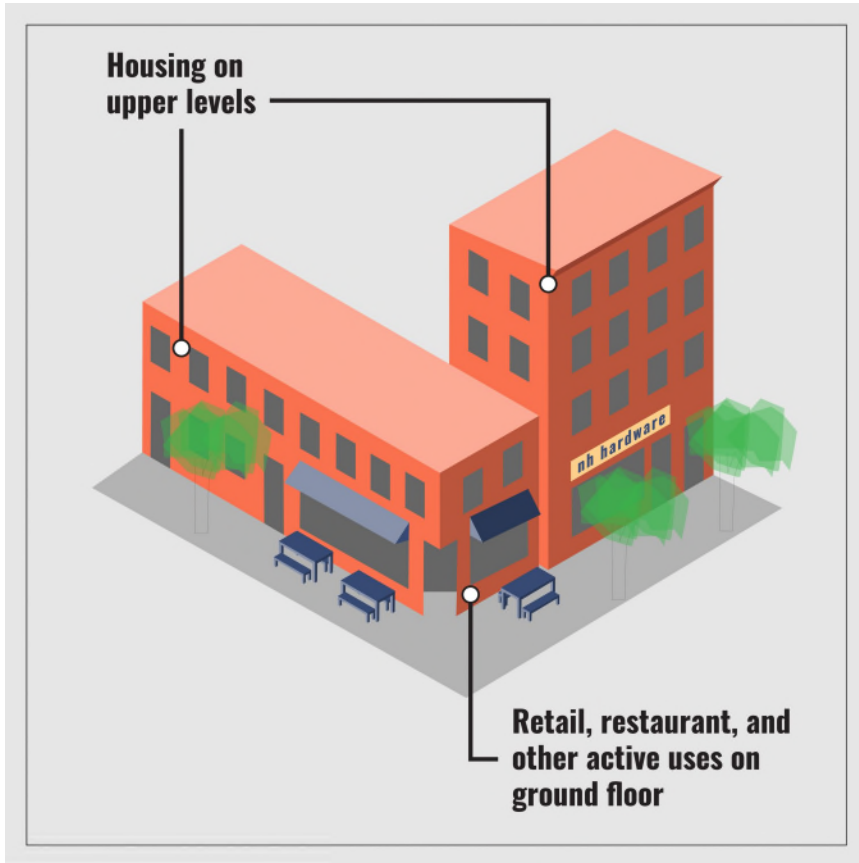
Alley Loaded:



Front Loaded:



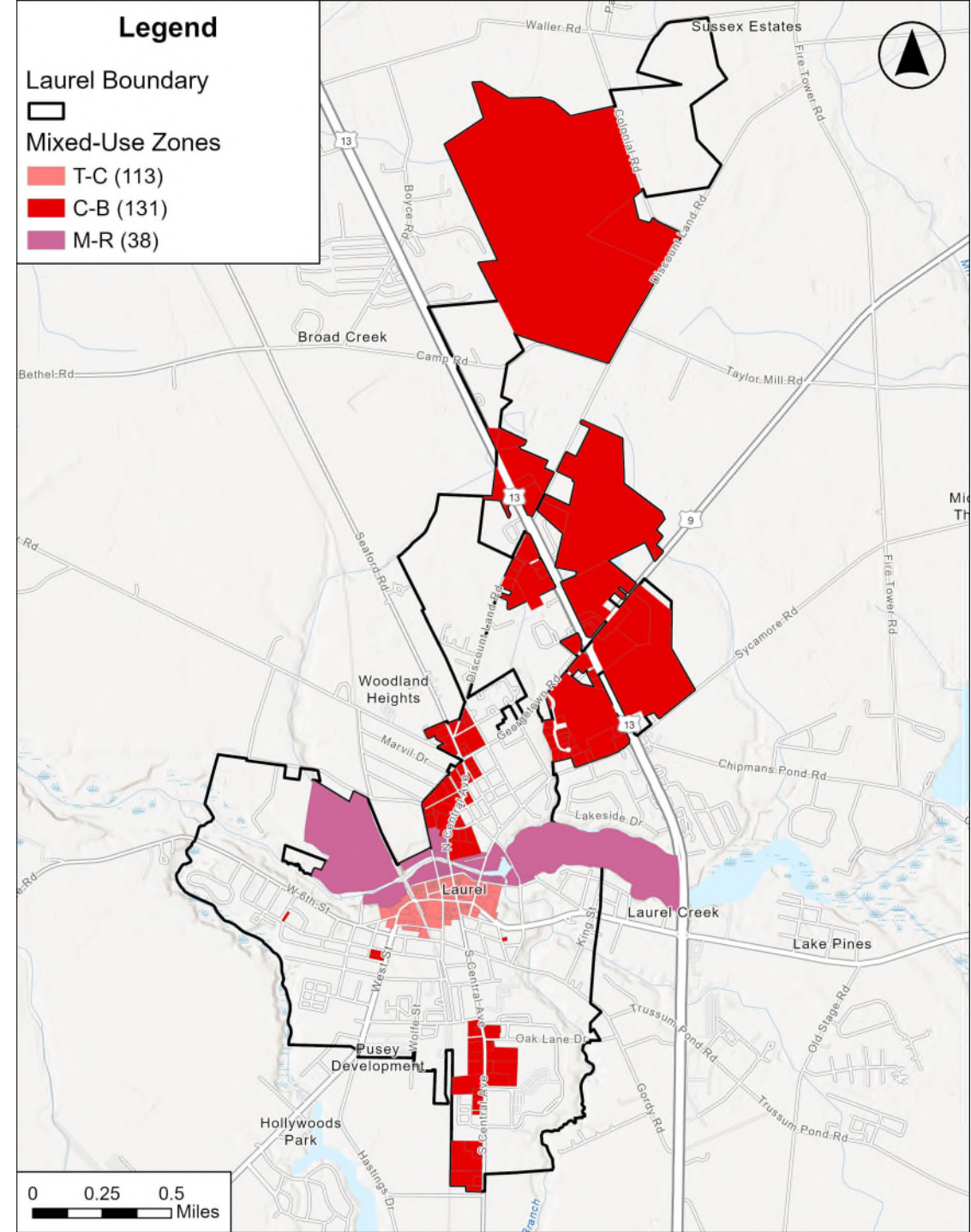
Mixed Use Development



Mixed Use

Where would mixed use fit best?

- Allow mixed use by-right in town center (T-C) district
- Allow single family attached and multifamily residential uses in commercial and business (C-B) district
- Expand residential uses permitted by-right in marine resources (M-R) district



Development Review Process

- Currently, most code-compliant residential projects require Planning and Zoning Commission approval for many **by-right residential projects**, extending review timelines and increasing development costs.
- Could any of these by-right residential developments be approved by Town staff instead of planning commission?
 - Single-family detached (<4 units)
 - Semi-detached / duplex (<4 units)
 - Townhome (<4 units)
 - Apartment (single) over commercial uses

Activities/Materials



Home health and personal care aid



You are a home health and personal care aid with no dependents and living alone.

This is the **eighth** most common detailed occupation in Sussex County, with 22 home health and personal care aids for every 1,000 total jobs.

- Annual mean income: **\$33,740**
- Mean monthly income: **\$2,812**

Review the current market options available in Laurel. Consider additional costs that go into housing beyond rent, such as utilities. What options are within your budget?

Monthly Survival Budget (excluding housing) for a single adult in Sussex County:

Child Care	\$0
Food	\$537
Transportation	\$396
Health Care	\$192
Technology	\$109
Miscellaneous	\$228
Taxes	\$410

Remaining Budget: **\$940**

Target Monthly Housing Cost (30% of total income): **\$844**

Reform Menu

- Fill out the menu to let us know which options you prefer. Please select as many as you wish.
- The menu has a **front** and **back**
- Submit your menu to the registration table before the night is over!

REFORM MENU



ADU APPETIZERS



PLEASE SELECT AT LEAST ONE ACCESSORY DWELLING UNIT (ADU) APPETIZER.

☐ DETACHED

☐ INTERIOR UPPER LEVEL

☐ ABOVE GARAGE



☐ ATTACHED

☐ INTERIOR LOWER LEVEL

☐ GARAGE CONVERSION



MISSING MIDDLE PLATES

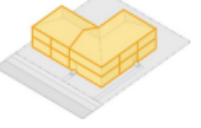


PLEASE SELECT AT LEAST ONE MISSING MIDDLE PLATE.

☐ SIDE-BY-SIDE DUPLEX

☐ COURTYARD BUILDING

☐ MULTIPLEX

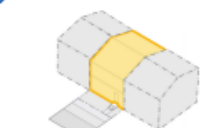
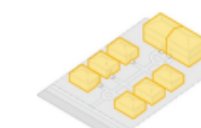


☐ STACKED DUPLEX

☐ COTTAGE COURT

☐ FOURPLEX

☐ TOWNHOUSE



ADD ON

☐ PRE-REVIEWED DESIGN PLAN

Please indicate which missing middle types you want to add pre-reviewed design plans to.

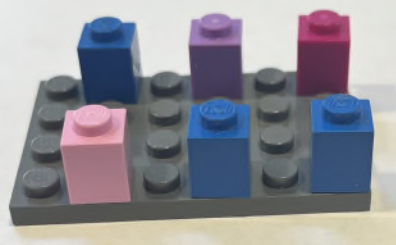
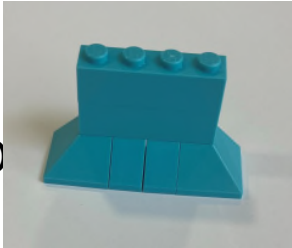
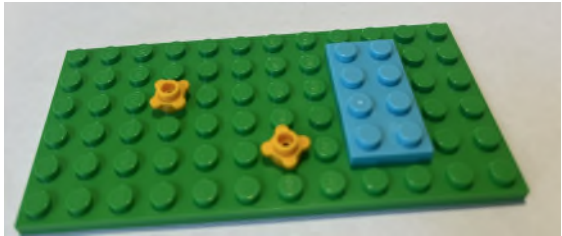
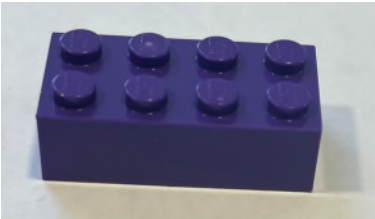
Missing Middle Lego Activity

- Participants will work together in small groups to build their own missing middle housing neighborhood using Lego bricks.
 - Up to 6 groups
 - Each group will assign a City Manager who will report out about major themes and be decisionmaker in cases of disagreement.
- Focus on where different housing types should go, rather than if it should exist at all. Groups must use all Legos.
- Participants place Legos on paper that has street outlines, can draw/label important features on the paper if desired.
- Groups will fill out a survey after building their neighborhood to explain their choices.
 - Staff will capture photos of final neighborhoods and explanations of why they designed it that way.



Missing Middle Lego Activity

Groups must use all provided Legos

Single Family Detached (35) 	Cottage court (1) 	Neighborhood service (5) 
Duplex (10) 	Multiplex (2)  or 	Park (1 large or 2 small) 
Fourplex (4) 	Bus stop (1) 	

Questions or Comments?



5 minutes left until we debrief.



Please complete both surveys:

Lego Survey:

HOUSING WORKSHOP

LEGO ACTIVITY

GROUP NUMBER: _____

INSTRUCTIONS:

Please use the form below to share the primary factors you considered when placing the different housing types in your neighborhood. Please check the **top 3** factors you considered for locations of different housing types.

HOUSING TYPE:	FACTORS								
	Near Parks	Near Shopping	Near Transit	Near K-12 Schools	Near Downtown	Along Primary Roads	Near Other Housing Types	Away from Other Housing Types	In Transition Areas
Single-Family Home	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Duplex	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Fourplex	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Multiplex	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Cottage Court	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Other: _____

Menu:

REFORM MENU



MISSING MIDDLE PLATES

PLEASE SELECT AT LEAST ONE MISSING MIDDLE PLATE.

- ☐ SIDE-BY-SIDE DUPLEX
- ☐ COURTYARD BUILDING
- ☐ MULTIPLEX
- ☐ STACKED DUPLEX
- ☐ COTTAGE COURT
- ☐ APARTMENT ABOVE COMMERCIAL USE
- ☐ FOURPLEX
- ☐ TOWNHOUSE
- ☐ CONVERSION OF SINGLE-FAMILY TO MULTI-UNIT

Example floorplan of a single-family home converted into a 3-unit building.

MIXED-USE MAIN COURSE

PLEASE SELECT AT LEAST ONE MIXED-USE MAIN COURSE.

- ☐ EXPAND MIXED USE OPTIONS IN COMMERCIAL AREAS
 ☐ CREATE COMPACT, MIXED-USE HUBS ALONG KEY ROUTES TO PROMOTE ALTERNATIVE TRANSIT SERVICES
- ☐ REFINE ANNEXATION STRATEGIES TO PROVIDE ADDITIONAL WORKFORCE HOUSING IN MIXED-USE AREAS

Thank you!