

Recommended Average Residential Density Program

(Excerpt from Draft Land Use Element pgs. 66-68)

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 Draft General Plan Land Use Map. They include the two tier multi-family Medium High and High Density 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.

AVERAGE RESIDENTIAL DENSITY

The purpose of an average residential density 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. There are two multi-family land use designations: Medium-High Residential and High Residential. 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 ranging from approximately 1,300 square feet for the lowest densities to 800 square feet for the highest densities. 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 are both minimums and maximums per the respective designation. Single family homes are exempted from the minimum requirement. 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".

Therefore, the residential density for any given project 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 25 or 34 du/ac.

The following average density tables reflect the base density, excluding the 15% Inclusionary Ordinance requirement and the State mandated 25 percent Bonus Density program for very-low and low-income projects. Additional densities may be allowed on a project-by-project basis consistent with the City’s Affordable Housing program policies, which include provisions for Single Room Occupancy (SRO) units under 400 square feet, rental housing, or as specified as part of the Mobility Oriented Development Area density incentives (see Goals, Policies and Implementation chapter).

Medium-High Density Residential (15 -25 du/acre)

The Medium-High Density Residential designation applies primarily to the periphery of the downtown and commercial corridors. This designation principally serves as a transition from the medium density neighborhoods to the commercial centers of the city. 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 reflect 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.

Table 1: Medium-High Density Residential

Average Unit Size	Base Density
1300 sq ft	15 du/ac
1250 sq ft	16 du/ac
1180 sq ft	17 du/ac
1115 sq ft	18 du/ac
1055 sq ft	19 du/ac
1000 sq ft	20 du/ac
955 sq ft	21 du/ac
910 sq ft	22 du/ac
870 sq ft	23 du/ac
835 sq ft	24 du/ac
800 sq ft	25 du/ac

Any units constructed below the minimum density of 15 du/acre cannot exceed a maximum size of 1,300 square feet. Conversely, any units constructed at a size smaller than 800 square feet cannot exceed the maximum density of 25 du/acre.

High Density Residential (27 - 34 du/acre)

High Density Residential applies to both multi-family and mixed use designations in the more urban centers, with a base density range between 27 to 34 dwelling units per acre. 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. This designation is applied to a majority of the residential parcels surrounding the Downtown and State and Alamar areas. These areas have historically been developed with denser, multi-family uses, and are consistent with the existing R-3 and R-4 residential zoning classifications.

Table: 2: High Density Residential

Average Unit Size	Base Density
1000 sq ft	27 du/ac
965 sq ft	28 du/ac
930 sq ft	29 du/ac
900 sq ft	30 du/ac
870 sq ft	31 du/ac
845 sq ft	32 du/ac
820 sq ft	33 du/ac
800 sq ft	34 du/ac

Any units constructed below the minimum density of 27 du/ac cannot exceed a maximum size of 1,000 square feet. Conversely, any units constructed at an average size smaller than 800 square feet cannot exceed the maximum density of 34 du/acre.