

# Compact Housing

## Providing Choice and Diversity



## Compact Housing Models

1. **Compact Single Family Detached**  
7 – 21 units per acre
2. **Single Family with Secondary Unit**  
17-24 units per acre
3. **Multiple Units, Single Family Appearance**  
8-22 units per acre
4. **Rowhouses**  
10-40 units per acre
5. **Multifamily Walkup Flats and Apartments**  
16-51 units per acre
6. **Multifamily Elevator Apartments**  
21-236 units per acre



## Understanding Density

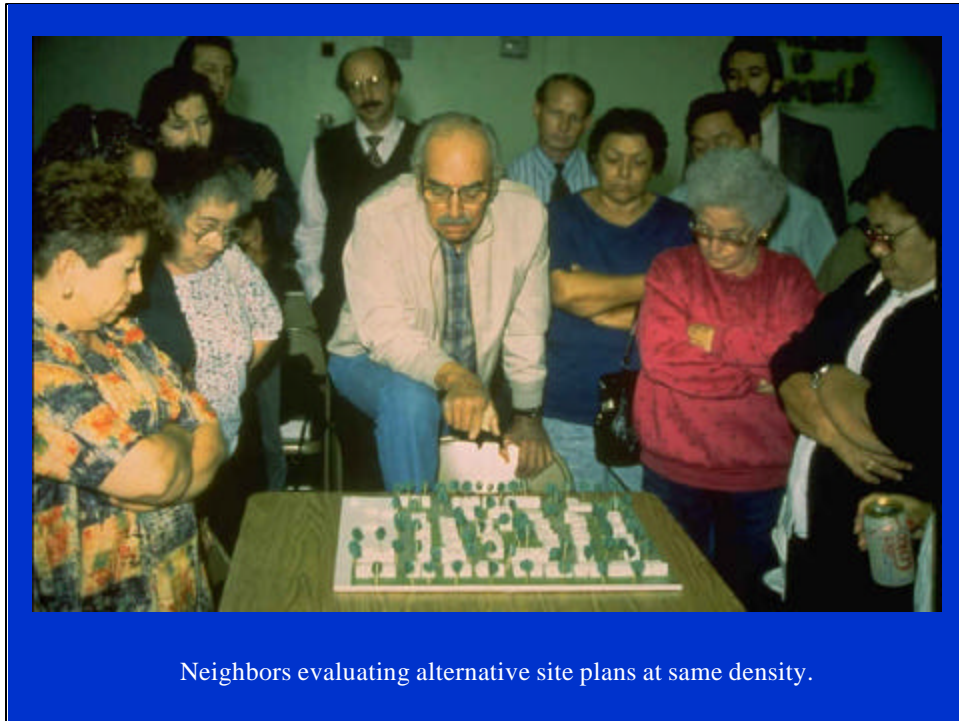
“Density” is a word with many negative connotations for the general public, while increased density may provide many positive benefits for affordable housing developers and their residents. In a separate Paper on “Understanding Density” a more detailed discussion is provided concerning what density is, how people’s opinions are formed about it, and what approaches seem to work in working with design teams and community outreach efforts to achieve “good density”.

The following presentation looks at the various models for achieving density, recognizing some universal issues that shape public opinion and building designs across the breadth of possible models.

1. Communication and terminology are critical- the term density has been replaced by the term compact housing because this more neutral term does not instill such passionate objection
2. Sponsors inherit the history of others – strong opinions about density may be rooted in past negative experiences that are more likely to be attributable to bad planning, design, management, or tenant selection. But density gets blamed for everything
3. Working with the public is essential- Not all opponents get converted, but public participation can be a positive way to shape the most appropriate design for the community, and win support in the process.

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- The existing pattern of front yards – this is one of the major ways to relate to the existing context, although it may conflict with goals for larger rear or side open space



The appropriate design and density strategy to pursue is often driven by several local and site specific variables:

- The existing pattern of front yards – this is one of the major ways to relate to the existing context, although it may conflict with goals for larger rear or side open space
- The shape of the lot- initial studies to look at existing and new circulation patterns will quickly reveal a few approaches that minimize the cost of new streets and infrastructure lines, and the lot dimensions will derive from this
- Local cultural and environmental factors – these determine the values of different types of open space, including porches , balconies, low fences, and landscaping, that may make the usually decorative but unused front yard more useful to the residents

Ultimately all designs have to grapple with approaches to the following three interrelated site planning and layout issues:

- Building Typology
- Open Space
- Parking