



# Albany Development Code Middle Housing Standards

## Cottage Clusters

The following information includes the general Albany Development Code (ADC) standards relating to Cottage Cluster developments. Additional standards may be applicable to your specific project. If you have questions about your specific project, please contact us at [cd.customerservice@cityofalbany.net](mailto:cd.customerservice@cityofalbany.net) or 541-917-7550.

**What is a Cottage Cluster?** A grouping of detached dwelling units (cottages) with a density of at least four dwellings per gross acre, a footprint of less than 900 square feet each, and that includes a common courtyard. Cottage clusters are considered a type of middle housing and are not considered multi-family or single-family detached dwellings, under the ADC. Cottage clusters typically have multiple cottages sharing a single lot; however, cottages clusters can also be divided through the middle housing land division process so that cottages are on individual lots.

**Cottage Cluster Project:** A development site with one or more cottage clusters. Each cottage cluster as part of a cottage cluster project must have its own common courtyard. (Land use review required.)

### Where Cottage Clusters are permitted, the process, and requirements:

One cottage cluster is allowed per lot in residential areas with a building permit when the development code (ADC) and applicable building code, fire code, and engineering standards are met.

**Utilities:** Lots must be served by water and sewer. Meter and line sizes are based on the number of plumbing fixtures; building codes may require upsizing existing services.

**Middle Housing Development Land Divisions** are permitted but require each dwelling to meet building codes, be on its own lot, and served with separate utility connections. See Article 11, Sections 11.600-11.630 for standards and process. *If you are considering a future land division, we suggest a pre-application meeting so that staff can help you plan ahead to reduce costs at the land division stage.*

### DEVELOPMENT CODE STANDARDS for Cottage Clusters (ADC Table 3.190-1):

RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS (Table 3.190-1)								
STANDARDS BY ZONE for PARENT PARCEL	RR	RS-10	RS-6.5	HM	RS-5	RM	RMA	HDR
<b>LOT SIZE – Minimum</b>	5 acres	10,000 sf	7,000 sf	7,000 sf	7,000 sf	7,000 sf	7,000 sf	None (20)
<b>Minimum Lot Width</b>	N/A	65 ft	50 ft	35 ft	40 ft	30 ft	None	None
<b>Setbacks - additional setbacks may be required; see Sections 3.192, 3.230-3.330 and buffer matrix in 9.210:</b>								
Minimum Front	10 ft	10 ft	10 ft	10 ft	10 ft	10 ft	10 ft	10 ft
Minimum Interior: single-story	5 ft	5 ft	5 ft	5 ft	5 ft	3 ft	3ft	(14)
Minimum Interior: 2+ stories	8 ft	8 ft	8 ft	6 ft	6 ft	5 ft	5 ft	5 ft
Min. Garage/carport for vehicle entrance from streets	20 ft	20 ft	20 ft	20 ft	20 ft	20 ft	20 ft	20 ft
<b>Maximum Height</b>	25 ft	25 ft	25 ft	25 ft	25 ft	25 ft	25 ft	25 ft
<b>Max. Lot Coverage</b> (structures)	Exempt	Exempt	Exempt	Exempt	Exempt	Exempt	Exempt	Exempt

(14) See section 8.240 for standards.

(20) Lot sizes in the HDR zone are controlled by the allowed density range of 25 units to 50 units per gross acre.

### 3.192 -Development Standards for Cottage Clusters.

- All cottages within a single cottage cluster must share a common courtyard.
- Minimum Density. The minimum density for a cottage cluster project is 4 units per gross acre.
- Building Separation. Cottages shall be separated by a minimum distance of six (6) feet. The minimum distance between all other structures, including accessory structures, shall be in accordance with building code requirements.

**Maximum Building Footprint.** Each cottage shall have a building footprint of less than 900 square feet. Individual attached garages up to 200 square feet shall be exempted from the calculation of maximum building footprint.

**Parking** –can be individual spaces, attached or detached garages (up to 400 SF), shared parking, or any combo.

**Attached garages:**

- Up to 200 SF can be exempted from 900 SF maximum cottage footprint, per State law
- If > 200 SF, amount over 200 SF is included in cottage footprint
- Garage SF included in floor area SF

The diagram shows two scenarios for a cottage with a 900 SF footprint and a 200 SF attached garage. In the 'Footprint' scenario, the total footprint is 1100 SF. In the 'Floor Area' scenario, the total floor area is 1400 SF, calculated as 800 SF footprint + 300 SF garage footprint + 500 SF 2nd floor.

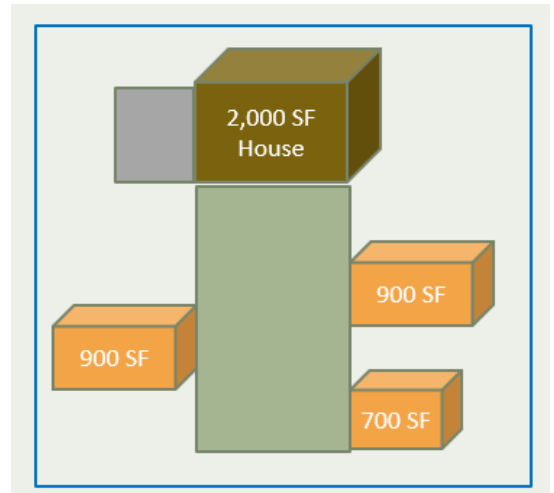
### How does an existing house affect a cottage cluster development?

An existing detached single-family dwelling on a lot or parcel to be used for a cottage cluster project may remain within the cottage cluster project area (ADC 8.175(10)).

The existing dwelling is not required to be oriented to the common courtyard and is excluded from the calculation of the 50% minimum orientation standard in 8.175(3).

The floor area of the existing dwelling is excluded from the calculation of average floor area for the cottage cluster, per 8.175(2)(c).

**Can I add on to the existing house?** Only if the existing dwelling does not exceed the maximum height of 25 feet and maximum building footprint of 900 SF or 1100 SF with attached garage. Existing dwellings that exceed the maximum height and/or footprint standards may not be expanded.



### **DESIGN STANDARDS that apply to COTTAGE CLUSTERS (ADC Article 8)**

**Note:** If a cluster has been divided by a middle housing land division, the design standards in below are applicable to the lot shall apply to the middle housing parent lot, not to the middle housing child lots.

8.120 Relationship to Historic Overlay Districts. For property inside the Historic Overlay Districts and properties designated as Historic Landmarks, the provisions in Article 7 also apply. For development subject to historic review under Article 7, the review body may grant flexibility in meeting any of the design standards where necessary to achieve historic compatibility.

8.175 **Design Standards for the Cottage Cluster.** Cottage clusters are clusters of small, detached dwelling units (cottages) that are oriented around a common courtyard. Cottage clusters typically share amenities such as open space and parking. The purpose of this section is to provide standards that promote quality development; create a sense of openness and community; and enhance the livability, walkability, and safety of the community.

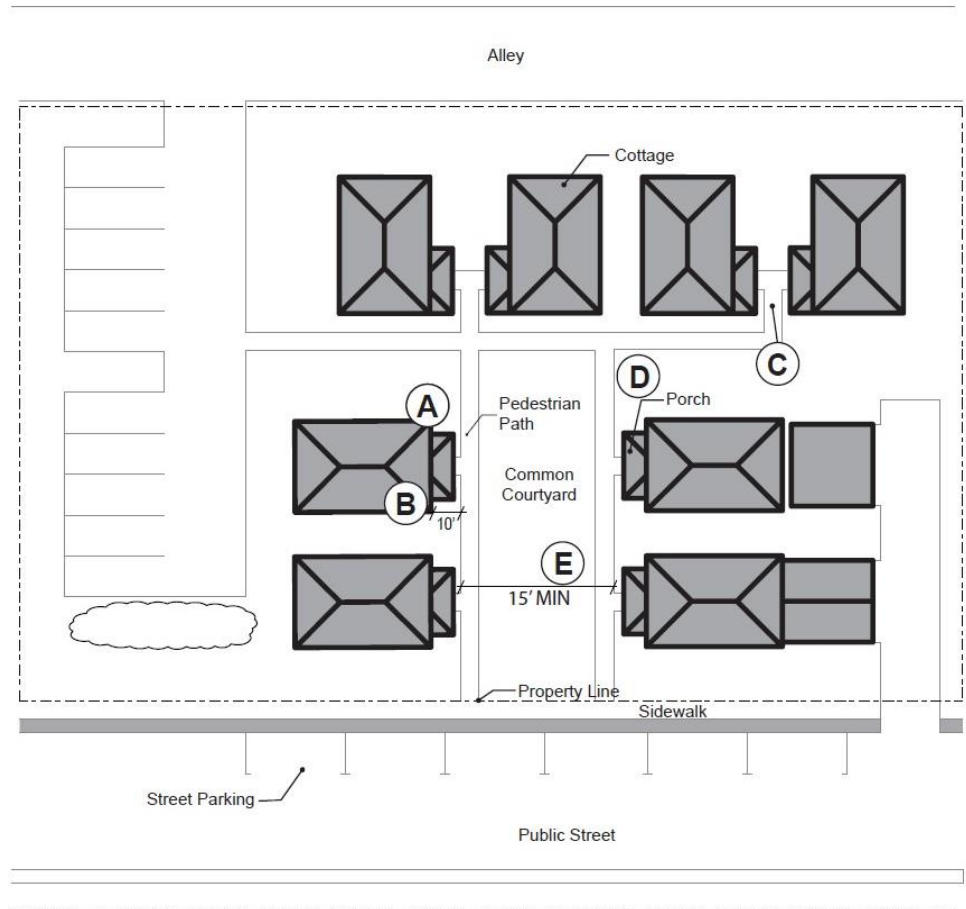
- (1) **Number of Dwellings.** minimum of three (3) and a maximum of eight (8) cottages per cluster; one cottage cluster is permitted per lot.
- (2) **Floor Area.** The purpose of these standards is to ensure that cottages are limited in size while providing flexibility for a

range of unit sizes within a cottage cluster. Limiting unit size promotes lower-cost housing choices and promotes accessibility for residents of various ages and abilities.

- (a) **Floor Area** is defined in ADC Section 22.400; however, for the purpose of this section, “floor area” includes stairwells, ramps, shafts, chases, and the area devoted to garages. Floor area does not include porches, exterior balconies, or other similar areas, unless they are enclosed. Floor area is measured for each floor from the exterior faces of a building or structure.
  - (b) **Maximum Floor Area.** The maximum permitted floor area of each cottage is 1,400 square feet.
  - (c) **Average Floor Area.** The maximum average floor area permitted for a cottage cluster is 1,000 square feet per cottage. Community buildings shall be included in the average floor area calculation for a cottage cluster.
- (3) **Cottage Orientation.** The purpose of these standards is to provide a sense of community within a cottage cluster, and to ensure that each dwelling has access to a common courtyard. Cottages must be clustered around a common courtyard and must meet the following standards (see Figure 8.175-1):
- (a) Each cottage must either abut the common courtyard or be directly connected to it by a pedestrian path.
  - (b) A minimum of 50 % of cottages within a cluster must be oriented to the common courtyard and must:
    - i. Have a main entrance facing the common courtyard;
    - ii. Be within 10 feet from the common courtyard, measured from the façade of the cottage to the nearest edge of the common courtyard; and
    - iii. Be connected to the common courtyard by a pedestrian path.
  - (c) Cottages within 20 feet of a street property line may have their entrances facing the street.
  - (d) Cottages not facing the common courtyard, or the street must have their main entrances facing a pedestrian path that is directly connected to the common courtyard.

**Figure 8.175-1. Cottage Cluster Orientation and Common Courtyard Standards**

- (A)** A minimum of 50% of the cottages must be oriented to the common courtyard.
- (B)** Cottages oriented to the common courtyard must be within 10 ft of the courtyard.
- (C)** Cottages must be connected to the common courtyard by a pedestrian path.
- (D)** Cottages must abut the courtyard on at least two sides of the courtyard.
- (E)** The common courtyard must be at least 15 feet wide at its narrowest width.



- (4) **Common Courtyard Design Standards** will help to ensure that common courtyards provide usable shared spaces that are adequately sized, located, and functional, and that are an integral part of the overall cottage cluster design. Each cottage cluster must share a common courtyard. Common courtyards must meet the following standards (see Figure 8.175-1):
- (a) The common courtyard must be a single, contiguous piece.
  - (b) The common courtyard must contain a minimum of 150 square feet per cottage within the cluster.
  - (c) The common courtyard must be a minimum of 15 feet wide at its narrowest dimension.
  - (d) Cottages must abut the common courtyard on at least two sides of the courtyard.
  - (e) The common courtyard shall be developed with a mix of landscaping, lawn area, pedestrian paths, and/or paved courtyard area, and may also include recreational amenities. Impervious elements of the common courtyard shall not exceed 75 percent of the total common courtyard area.
  - (f) Pedestrian paths must be included in a common courtyard. Paths that are contiguous to a courtyard shall count toward the courtyard's minimum dimension and area. Parking areas, required setbacks, and driveways do not qualify as part of a common courtyard.
- (5) **Community Building.** One community building is permitted per cottage cluster for the shared use of residents are permitted that provide space for accessory uses such as community meeting rooms, guest housing, exercise rooms, daycare, or community eating areas. Community buildings must meet the following standards:
- Maximum floor area of 1,400 square feet; but the floor area counts towards the maximum average floor area of the cottage cluster of 1,000 square feet per ADC 8.175(2)(c).
  - Community buildings shall not be used for long-term residential occupancy. For the purposes of this standard, long-term residential occupancy shall mean the continued use by the same occupant for longer than 14 days in any 60-day timeframe or for more than 30 days in a calendar year.
- (6) **Pedestrian Access.** The purpose of these standards is to ensure that pedestrian circulation systems are designed to provide safe and convenient connections within a cottage cluster development and to adjacent public streets/sidewalks.
- (a) An accessible pedestrian path must be provided that connects the main entrance of each cottage to the following:
    - i. The common courtyard;
    - ii. Shared parking areas;
    - iii. Community buildings; and
    - iv. Sidewalks in public rights-of-way abutting the site or rights-of-way if there are no sidewalks.
  - (b) The pedestrian path must be hard-surfaced and a minimum of four (4) feet wide.
- (7) **Street Facing Windows.** Cottages within 20 feet of a street property line must meet the Street-Facing Windows requirements of ADC 8.133.
- (8) **Parking Design.** These standards support a pedestrian-friendly street environment and livability for cottage cluster residents by minimizing the impacts of parking areas and garages (see Figure 8.175-2).
- (a) Off-street parking may be provided with individual cottages or arranged in clusters (shared parking lots).
  - (b) **Clustered parking.** If clustered/shared parking is proposed, it must meet the following standards:
    - i. A parking cluster must not exceed five (5) contiguous spaces.
    - ii. Parking clusters must be separated from other spaces by at least four (4) feet of landscaping.
    - iii. Clustered parking areas may be covered.
    - iv. Parking areas must also meet the standards in ADC Section 9.120, and parking areas that exceed 1,000 square feet must meet the standards in ADC Sections 9.130 and 9.150, except where they conflict with the standards in this subsection.

**Parking location and access.** Off-street parking spaces and vehicle maneuvering areas shall not be located:

    - Within 20 feet from any street property line, except alley property lines;
    - Between a street property line and the front façade of cottages located closest to the street property line. This standard does not apply to alleys.
    - within 10 feet of any other property line, except alley property lines, except that driveways/drive aisles are permitted within 10 feet of other property lines.
    - Driveways shall meet the access standards in ADC Section 12.100.
  - (c) **Screening.** Landscaping, fencing, or walls at least three feet tall shall separate clustered parking areas and parking

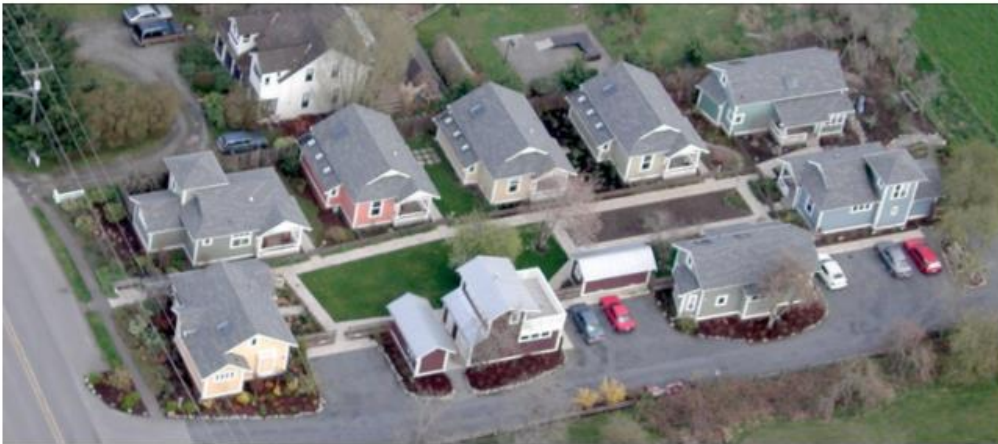
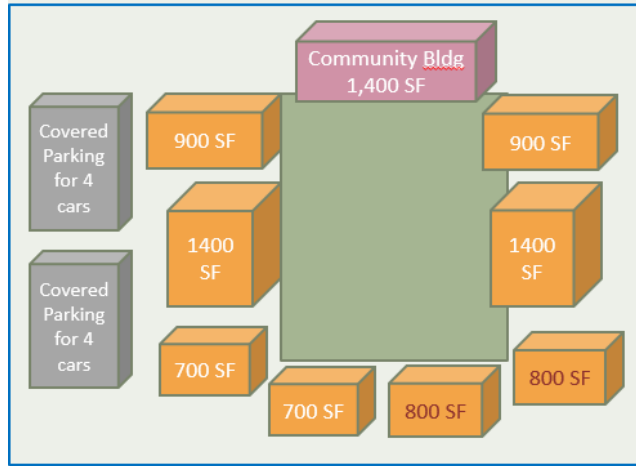
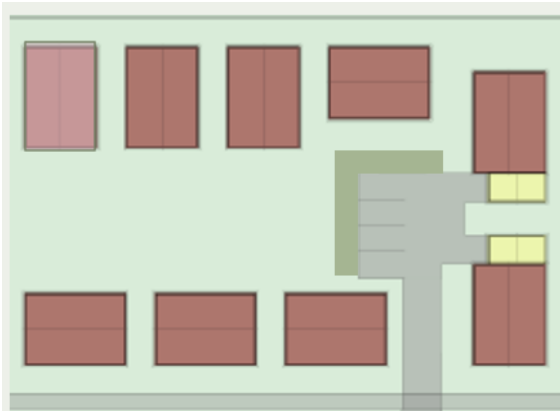
structures from common courtyards and public streets.

(d) Garages and carports.

- Garages and carports (whether shared or individual) must not abut common courtyards.
- Individual detached garages must not exceed 400 square feet in floor area.
- Garage doors for attached and detached individual garages must not exceed 20 feet in width.
- Garages shall not be converted into living space.

(9) Accessory Structures must not exceed 400 square feet in floor area.

Cottage Cluster Examples:



Third Street Cottages in Langley, WA, has 8 houses arranged around a garden courtyard on 4 city lots — .66 acres at a density of 12 units/acre.

Cottage Cluster Project Example:

