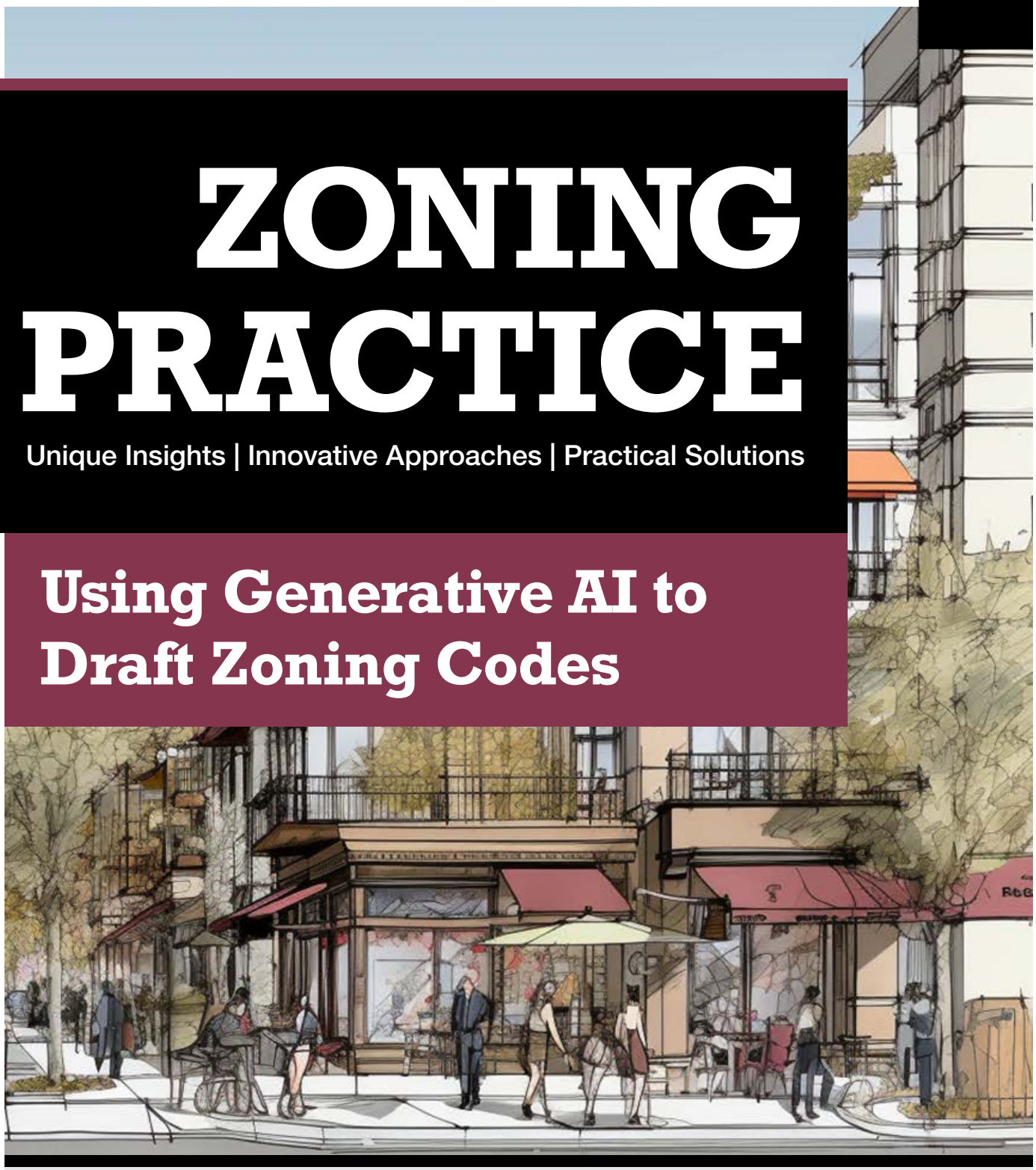
OCTOBER 2023 | VOL. 40 NO. 10

APA

ZONING PRACTICE

Unique Insights | Innovative Approaches | Practical Solutions

Using Generative AI to Draft Zoning Codes



In this Issue: The Building Blocks of Text and Images | A Brief Introduction to ChatGPT and Midjourney | Prompting ChatGPT to Draft Zoning Text | Prompting Patterns for Success | Prompting Midjourney to Illustrate Zoning Concepts | The Future Is Now, But Where Is It Going? | Appendix

Using Generative AI to Draft Zoning Codes

By Norman Wright, AICP

Artificial intelligence (AI) has been a topic of conversation for many years now. Yet, it was the advent of new consumer products like ChatGPT that helped the broader public see how disruptive (and transformative) the technology can be. Five minutes with any of the large language models available online will quickly demonstrate the incredible speed, accuracy, and comprehensiveness of information these tools produce. None of the models are perfect, of course, but limitations are often greater than we realize.

Yet, it is clear that artificial intelligence tools—specifically, the kind that produces generative text and images—are here to stay. The most popular products receive enormous amounts of investment and are on a rapid trajectory for mainstream usage in every industry. Planning is no exception.

This issue of *Zoning Practice* introduces key concepts related to the common use of today's generative AI models and then provides an overview of experiments done to test the current strengths and weaknesses for developing zoning policies at the local level. As you'll see, there is a lot for us all to learn—including the models themselves. The current products have limited abilities, but the potential is boundless.

The Building Blocks of Text and Images

Every aspect of a planner's work ultimately manifests in the text and imagery of our reports, plans, and regulations. This article is no exception. We communicate complex ideas through language and visual

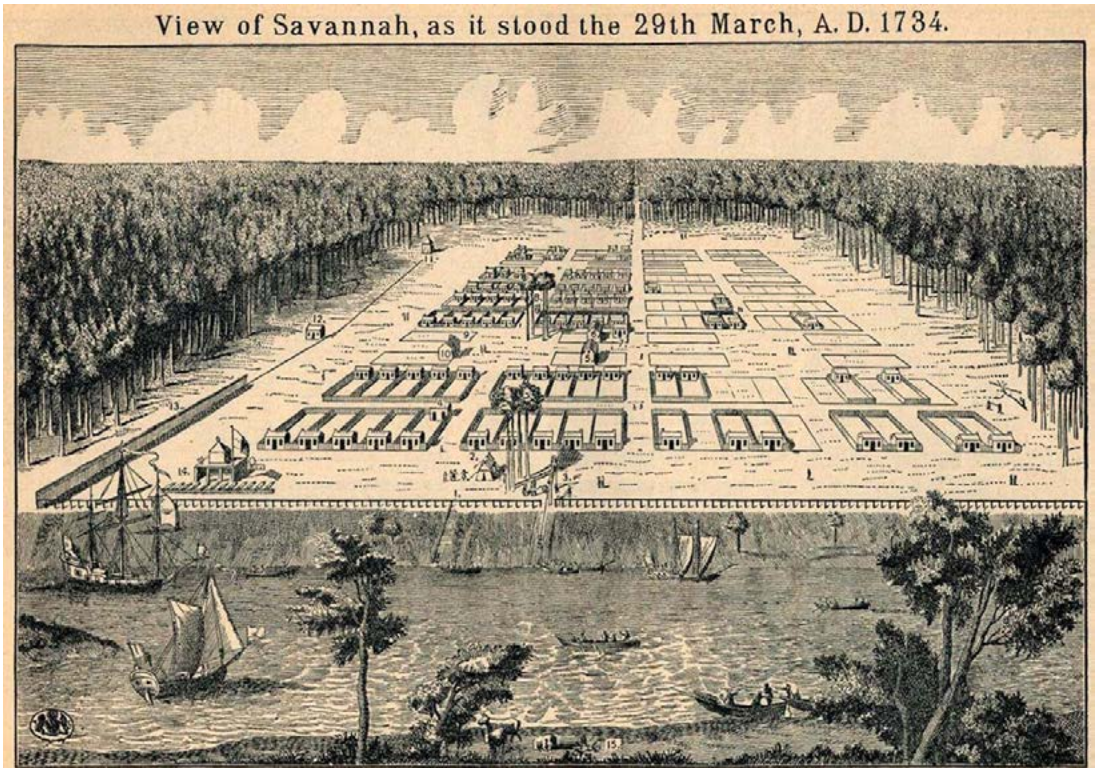


Figure 1. Savannah, Georgia, as it appeared in March 1734 (Credit: Paul Fourdrinier)

aids in order to invoke some method of regulatory guidance and control on the built environment.

In olden days, this took the form of a hand-rendered drawing for, say, colonial Savannah, Georgia (Figure 1). One can imagine those drawings accompanied by some set of rules for governing the area, scribed on parchment paper as a proto-version of conventional municipal code. Visual plans and textual ordinances have evolved since then, but none of the innovations have escaped the basic fact that, for our work to be impactful, it must be translated into words written and lines drawn.

Our good intentions can be lost in the translation. We are striving for some semblance of the greater good (i.e., public health, safety, and welfare) and, to achieve it, we write policies that control what a person can and cannot do with their legally owned property. If the wording is vague or the illustrations are inept, those regulatory limits create confusion and error. Likewise, if the logic that justifies the regulation is flawed, or creates harmful unintended consequences, our best efforts can make matters worse.

The practice of writing and designing zoning ordinances carries a tremendous level of power and responsibility.

It is important to regularly remind ourselves of these things. The practice of writing and designing zoning ordinances carries a tremendous level of power and responsibility. Thus, we should continuously seek any method that helps us do this work better than before. It all comes down to effective text and clear imagery. Those are the building blocks. This article will test the capabilities of two artificial intelligence models to create and optimize each. ChatGPT will be used for text; Midjourney for images.

A Brief Introduction to ChatGPT and Midjourney

ChatGPT is a large language model (LLM) that provides generative text based on the commands (i.e., prompts) that a user provides. The "generative" function is based on statistical reasoning derived from a vast corpus of textual information publicly available today—from the internet to books to archived newspapers and more. The model doesn't contain all the words written by humanity, but it works with enough verbiage to form a remarkable representation of human writing by utilizing the patterns of language that are present in every sentence we construct.

Like humans, the model forms its text one word at a time. Each additional word is a prediction of what it considers to be most appropriate. Appropriateness is predicated on probability. For example, if a user types the phrase:

Mary had a little

ChatGPT's response would be:

Mary had a little lamb,

After all, that is the response that a user would most likely want to see. The nursery rhyme is very popular. The word "lamb" is most commonly seen at the end of the phrase "Mary had a little..." This is how probability plays a role in the AI's generative function.

Note the comma at the end of the AI's response. ChatGPT deliberately includes a comma to signify the fact that this phrase is the first of a larger sentence/stanza that is part of the original nursery rhyme. Again, that is the most common pattern, and it shows that the pattern repetition relates to both the words and the grammar.

The performance is magical yet simple. The model has simply reproduced the most frequently matched, statistically likely result and has no idea that we might sing these words rather than speak them.

In this sense, it helps to think of ChatGPT as something like a "word calculator" that combines language according to a formula in the same way that a numerical calculator will combine numbers. This isn't the most precise description, but it can, hopefully, give you a sense of how this tool, like ordinary calculators, is dependent upon us—the users—to deliver proper inputs so that the model can deliver the best possible output.

This is also true for Midjourney, the generative image AI that produces remarkable, professional-grade artwork based on user inputs. Like ChatGPT, it relies *mostly* on text-based commands. For example, you could instruct Midjourney with the following:

Create a streetscape of modern Spain in the style of Picasso.

Midjourney will then use the keywords of this command to create four images associated with the broader patterns of language of the visual arts. See **Figure 2** for the result of my specific command.

This is a digital image created solely from the words I wrote into the interface. In this sense, Midjourney is similar to ChatGPT in that it uses text commands to inform its actions and results. However, Midjourney can also utilize images in two major ways: as weighted influences within the parameter set and as a blend function for combining different assets into a singular whole.

For example, I took the "Picasso" image output, re-entered it as part of a command prompt within Midjourney, and then asked the model to reinterpret those same images as a black and white drawing where the streetscape is placed inside a snowglobe. Furthermore, I asked the model to give the subject image a "standard" weight (i.e., influence) so that the model doesn't rely too much or too little on the original image when creating the new results. See the output below in **Figure 3**.

Look closely enough and you'll see errors in every sample. For one thing, no image is fully grayscale. Also, where's



Figure 2. Midjourney's response to the prompt, "Create a streetscape of modern Spain in the style of Picasso."



Figure 3. Midjourney's response to a prompt to reimagine a previously generated image of modern Spain in the style of Picasso as a black and white drawing inside a snowglobe

the snow? Clearly, the prompt needs more refinement and, thankfully, MidJourney offers the ability to iterate on the results with a few simple clicks of a button on the interface. There are several more variables and parameters to utilize, too—everything from defined aspect ratios to resolution levels to the amount of "chaos" and "blur." This gets a bit technical, but the idea is that users have many ways to refine and experiment.

The possibilities feel endless when engaging with both products. ChatGPT can read, write, and reproduce practically any style of text you may want to read. Midjourney can be your on-demand conceptual artist.

What else can these things do? It depends. As always, the tool is only as capable as its user.

Prompting ChatGPT to Draft Zoning Text

This is where the term "prompt engineering" comes to the fore. You might think "prompt engineering" refers to an engineer's timely delivery of work, but in this case, it is supposed to capture the art and science of speaking effectively to generative AI. Several techniques and tricks have emerged over the recent years. We tend to work with ChatGPT by issuing single, standalone commands like: "Write a summary of what ChatGPT can do." Or we ask a single question, such as: "What is machine learning?"

The goal here is to write an effective zoning policy. So a basic prompt to ChatGPT could be the following:

Write a zoning policy for missing middle housing.

And the result is a perfectly serviceable template for writing such a policy. You can try it yourself by copy/pasting this prompt, verbatim, into the free version of ChatGPT. Results can vary slightly, and all of my prompts and results are included in the appendix. Small differences aside, you'll see the model produces an excellent first draft of 500+ words full of themed sections and subsections with good formatting and effective ideas for what should and shouldn't be allowed in a "middle housing" district. The tenets are based on the most-common ideas the model has gleaned from its data.

Anyone who has copy/pasted the latest prompts above into the free version of ChatGPT should notice that the model not only provides useful standards in good, clear, ready-to-print language, it also provides the rationale to justify each requirement.

It's not exactly ready for council approval, however. So we might try to narrow the scope with a new prompt, shape it as a question, and include some technical details like so:

What is the ideal policy language for creating a medium-density residential zoning district that allows all housing types that are 50 feet tall or less?

When formed as a question, the model produces a shorter answer that has more guidance on what to consider and isn't simply a rote output of the policy itself. Also, even without the buzzwords "missing middle," the prompt above delivers something that is very similar to the earlier result. That's because the prompt uses terms that are synonymous—or otherwise strongly correlated—with the colloquial language. ChatGPT recognizes that *"medium-density residential zoning"* equates to *"missing middle housing."* Finally, because the prompt includes a condition that the housing be 50 feet tall or less, the model's output captures that one clear, numerical standard. The output is shorter too—clocking in at 451 words.

Both prompts seek the same ultimate outcome—a zoning policy for a particular type of development. By "engineering" the prompt in different ways—first as a command for something general, then as a question for guidance on something more specific—you can generate variations on the theme. From each output, you can zero-in on further refinements.

For example, the previous prompt generated some basic, generic language on density and setbacks. None of it was ready for an actual set of regulations. So, to refine it further, I told ChatGPT to do the following two tasks:

Create a specific, numerical standard for allowable units per acre for medium-density residential zoning.

Create a specific, numerical standard for front, side, and rear building setbacks for medium-density residential zoning.

In both cases, I am seeking more details on what will become the missing-middle zoning policy through a subordinate series of prompts. This continual refinement is called a *conversation* in the parlance of prompt engineering. By diving deeper into the specifics—setting up conditions (i.e., "create a specific, numerical standard …") and parameters ("...for front, side, and rear building setbacks …")—we get better results.

Anyone who has copy/pasted the latest prompts above into the free version of ChatGPT should notice that the model not only provides useful standards in good, clear, ready-to-print language, it also provides the rationale to justify each requirement. Thus, when the policy is potentially scrutinized in a public hearing, the model provides terrific answers for why each limit is calibrated as it is. When compared to most policy proposals in local government, I find this feature to be an immediate improvement. The rationale isn't necessarily better—it's just written more clearly and quickly.

Speaking of improvements, there are many more ways to refine a prompt and an even better version of the model to try. In the section ahead, we'll explore a few common techniques using the premium-level version of the software, ChatGPT-4.

Prompting Patterns for Success

Prompt engineering lends itself to certain patterns of language and combinations of words that can alter a model's output. One example is the *persona pattern.* To use this pattern, you write your prompt with the following context:

Act as Persona X [in order to] *perform task Y.*

In the planning arena, our natural persona is the following: *As an AICP-certified planner … perform a given task.*

I've tested this against the thread of prompts we've explored above (missing middle, medium-density residential) to see what is different using the persona prompt. There were a few noticeable differences in the responses, and the length was considerably greater with the AICP-persona. [Brevity isn't our strong suit, I guess?] But the substance of both answers is essentially the same.

Explaining the content, however, is where the persona prompt is notably stronger. Using ChatGPT-4, I ask the model to adopt an AICP-certified planner persona and explain the specifics of each policy's design. For example, when prompted with the following:

As an AICP-certified planner, explain why height restrictions of 2-3 stories to maintain a medium-density feel is important for a community.

The model provides a justification in roughly 20 seconds that would have taken me multiple drafts, a couple hours, and many more words. The concise, cohesive, and holistic answer is simply more than I can offer. The persona prompt also gives me a more expansive answer via the AICP-certified condition. There is additional nuance (sections and subsections of thematic text) and a focus on form and design that the non-AICP answer lacked. Best of all, it comes from a much broader corpus of information.

When I write this, I feel like I'm on a limb, speaking solely from my own limited (albeit technically sound and research-backed) point of view. When I take it from the model, and perhaps add my own slight modifications, I feel more confident in what I'm saying. This is true with number calculators, too. I can do basic multiplication in my head, but I still feel more confident with what the calculator tells me. This isn't a perfect one-to-one comparison (mathematics and language are different things), but the basic idea is that a large language model gives us a sense of confirmation and helps us see a reasonable thread of logic in what we think based on how we prompt. Just remember that we're dealing with policy matters here; no objectively correct answer will emerge the way it might in mathematics.

Just remember that we're dealing with policy matters here; no objectively correct answer will emerge the way it might in mathematics.

Next is the *audience-persona pattern*. This is a valuable prompt to refine detailed answers in a way that a broader audience can understand. Thus far, all other prompts I've used will invariably generate content that is full of technical words and industry jargon. To clarify the ideas for others (a difficult and important task), I fashioned a new prompt as follows—using the persona and audience-persona patterns together:

As an AICP-certified planner, explain why height restrictions of 2-3 stories to maintain a medium-density feel is important for a community. Write the answer in a way that is understandable to audiences with a 6th-grade reading level.

The result was terrific. Themes and concepts were delivered in plain language that was more colloquial, friendly, and accurate. I truly couldn't have done better myself.

Here are a few other patterns to consider, all of which deliver unique and useful results from the ChatGPT-4 model:

Question refinement: As a "pre-prompt" for a question, set the model's intention with the following basic script:

From now on, when I ask a question, suggest a better version of the question to use instead.

Such a prompt will help ChatGPT to help you in building your next set of prompts. Then it's simply a matter of

telling the model to answer the very question it just raised.

Flipped interaction prompts: Roles are swapped in this prompt; we use the model to ask us questions. We then provide answers and can have the model ask follow-up questions. This powerful form of interaction can help us better explore the abstract problems we deal with. For example, I decided to strain my mind with the following prompt:

I would like you to ask me questions about how city planning can resolve the housing affordability crisis.

The model produced 15 questions, all quite challenging. I then decided to address one of the questions, writing my answer in a new prompt and finishing with another prompt:

Ask me a follow-up question about this.

Which then led to a very good follow-up. I continued the back-and-forth for three more rounds and found myself sufficiently challenged (and thoroughly engaged) in remarkable ways. The role reversal in this prompt is an excellent way to strengthen your knowledge of any topic. I can finally work with a conversation partner who doesn't tire of my endless deep thinking!

Template-pattern prompts: Returning to our goal of creating actual zoning policy, engaged readers will have already seen what's possible with basic prompt designs provided above. Yet, even in the best of situations, I cannot readily create the sort of language and style that I really want to achieve in a policy document. The results are close—very close—but the model needs multiple iterations (i.e., conversations) to get to the clarity I want. Is there a way to bypass that process?

In my experience, template-pattern prompts are our best method for creating any type of land-use policy that has precise standards and repeatable, fungible formats.

In my experience, template-pattern prompts are our best method for creating any type of land-use policy that has precise standards and repeatable, fungible formats. This is the best way to essentially create the "Mad Libs" policy-writing approach that we normally do in our heads. Take a look at any decently formatted zoning ordinance, and you will see repeated patterns and templates that organize our requirements in bulk standards and tables that correspond to the specific goal. Template-pattern prompts can be designed to incorporate that framework into the model. The prompt takes some effort and specificity, and requires ChaptGPT4 for best results, but the results are indeed astonishing. Here is a prompt for the aforementioned missing middle housing:

Create a missing middle zoning policy document for me. I am going to provide a template for your output. CAPITALIZED WORDS are my placeholders for content. Try to fit the output into one or more of the placeholders that I list. Please preserve the formatting and overall template that I provide. This is the template: POLICY TITLE, USES ALLOWED, USES PROHIBITED, MAXIMUM DENSITY, PARKING MINIMUMS, FRONT SETBACKS, SIDE SETBACKS, REAR SETBACKS, FLOOR AREA RATIO MAXIMUM, LANDSCAPING REQUIREMENTS, TRANSPARENCY REQUIREMENTS, LIGHTING REQUIREMENTS, ARCHITECTURE GUIDELINES.

Again, ChatGPT-4 is critical for getting an actual result that is adoption-ready. And rest assured that it is largely ready to go. I would personally only make a few alterations to the output, mostly superficial stuff to match the language and formatting of a preexisting ordinance. The result can be seen in the appendix of this document.

Of course, the policy would need legal verbiage for its adoption ordinance. The policy might even need enabling legislation from the state government. So I asked ChatGPT-4 to provide those as well. The prompts are below and the results are absolutely as good as anything a planning director (me) would write on their own. With this as a first draft, we can confidently review, refine, and hand it over to the legal team for the finer details. Or, using the template pattern prompt, we can shape

the model to write this according to the patterns of our existing documents.

Write an adoption ordinance for establishing a missing middle policy in the City of Cascadia, Oregon.

Write the enabling legislation that will allow the City of Cascadia, Oregon, to implement a missing middle housing policy.

There are many other aspects of administration where this model can help. Imagine how effective this prompt can be in developing public notice letters, standard advertisements, and staff reports. With practice, these prompts (along with a few other patterns I haven't covered, such as *chain of thought* prompts) can be molded into a specific library of commands that staff applies to practically every bit of content they develop. The model will then generate that content with a level of speed, consistency, and quality (no typos) that no team can match.

This only scratches the surface of an LLM's capabilities. And please note that ChatGPT is one of many available products. All LLMs are responsive to prompt engineering patterns like the ones described here. For more prompt patterns, see "**A Prompt Pattern Catalog to Enhance Prompt Engineering with ChatGPT**"— the best research paper I've found on the topic.

In conclusion, anyone who works with these prompts and looks at the results will recognize the areas where the outputs fall short. I don't think anyone should argue that these models will replace us any time soon. Nonetheless, the standard model capability today offers us a very powerful tool for delivering a better first draft of just about anything we produce. Imagine what more will be possible with continued practice.

Prompting Midjourney to Illustrate Zoning Concepts

Text generators like ChatGPT show the fungible and commoditized future of our written intellectual property. Incredibly, there is a similar commoditization within reach in the visual arts. Generative image-producing AI like Midjourney is surrounded in controversy because it clearly emulates all manner of styles associated with particular artists. My early example was deliberately presented to show how I, an utter novice, can use this tool in an attempt to "copy" Picasso. I don't think Picasso would appreciate that. After all, he famously said that great artists don't copy, they *steal.*

My lengthy exploration with Midjourney has shown me that generative AI is wholly capable of delivering any form of high-quality conceptual art. Like ChatGPT, it responds to text-based prompts—in this case, descriptions of the images you want to see. Unlike ChatGPT, the user



Figure 4. A view of Portland, Oregon's Hawthorne District in 2021 (Credit: Google)



Figure 5. Midjourney's response to the prompt, "Urban streetscape from ground view with midrise buildings, street trees, sidewalks, pedestrians, bicycle lanes, on-street parking, three lanes of traffic and one of the lanes featuring a light rail train car."

interface isn't very friendly. The model is accessed through a Discord server (i.e., an online forum similar to Reddit) that continuously streams not just your prompts and images but also the prompts and images of hundreds more people. It's a little overwhelming at first, but then it becomes highly alluring. You'll be amazed to see what other people are doing with the model; everyone's work unfolds before your eyes.

There are other generative image models (e.g., Stable Diffusion and DALL-E). I've tried them and find that they don't deliver the same accuracy and responsiveness as Midjourney. So, for now, we'll focus on this particular product.

When you enter a prompt into Midjourney, it produces four variations of the description. You can have the model "reroll" the results, producing four new images, or you can focus on one of the four options you like most and have the model improve it with upscaling (i.e., refining the details) or explore its themes further with greater variation (i.e., produce four new options based on the single most-preferred option). As an example, see the prompt below and the images above.

First, a bit of context. I wanted to convey an idea for increased density, complete streets, and walkable environments for the Hawthorne District in Portland, Oregon. I love this part of the city. It is one of those rare places that is vibrant yet full of unrealized potential. As the city continues to grow, places like this will be crucial for densification. It's already happening in a piecemeal fashion. You can see "green



Figure 6. Midjourney's response to the prompt to upscale a previously generated view of an urban streetscape

shoots'' of densification in the Google Streetview image above (**Figure 4**).

Add transit, a lush streetscape, and more density, and you will see the inevitable future of Portland. So why not offer it now? I prompted Midjourney with the following description:

Urban streetscape from ground view with midrise buildings, street trees, sidewalks, pedestrians, bicycle lanes, on-street parking, three lanes of traffic and one of the lanes featuring a light rail train car.

Figure 5 above shows my results.

As conceptual drawings go, I cannot imagine anyone providing me a better level of quality and style to match my vision. I selected the bottom-left image as my preferred option. I then asked that image to be upscaled. The final result took less than four minutes to produce (**Figure 6**).

This, of course, is not a technical drawing. Zoning policy is best informed by technical drawings of the sort we find in a common form-based code, with simple lines, clear annotations, isometric perspective, and plain shapes that signify building mass and proportion while leaving the rest to imagination.

Technical drawings of this style are easy enough to create. I built an example in SketchUp. See **Figure 7** below.

Not exactly high art, is it? This basic shape is drawn in Sketchup to help me see what a 40-foot tall building looks like on a 60-foot by 100-foot parcel of land with parking in the rear and a 60 percent lot coverage requirement (pavement and buildings included). Again, I drew it in five minutes. And if I do some tweaking to the line weights, add shadows, switch to

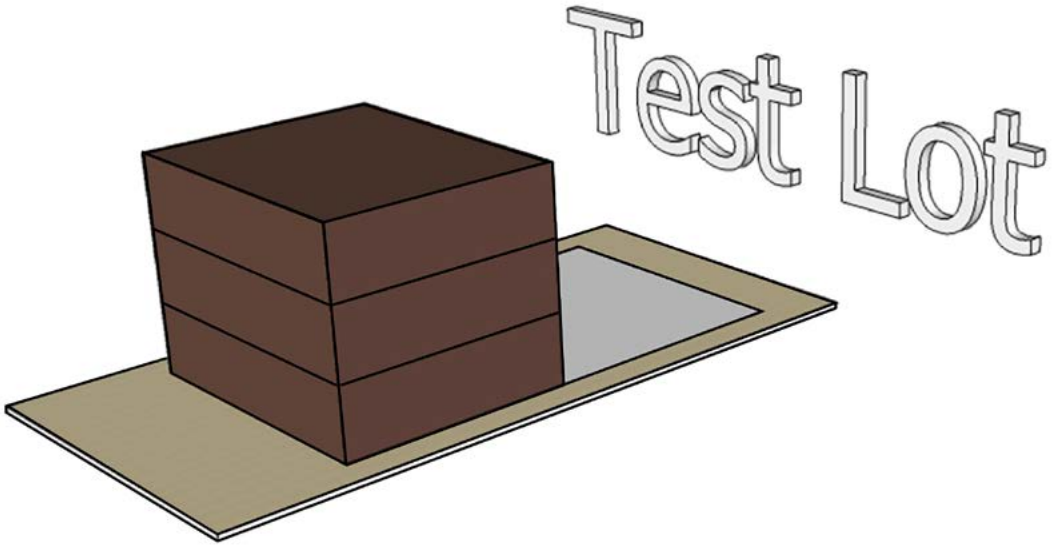


Figure 7. A SketchUp illustration of a permissible building envelope on a lot (Credit: Norman Wright)

grayscale, and add a few other stylistic flourishes in Adobe Creative Suite, it will be ready for inclusion in a zoning ordinance. That will require roughly 30 minutes. Can MidJourney do it better? And faster?

Here is my prompt for the same basic diagram:

Simple black and white isometric diagram of a 40 foot tall, 30 foot wide, 60 foot long rectangle on a 60 foot x 100 foot rectangle of land drawn with simple straight lines.

The result is below (**Figure 8**).

This is more "high art," I think. And definitely not what I want. Midjourney remains bound to the more conceptual expressions of the idea. So I tried another prompt to hopefully get the model to think more, say, simply:

Simple black and white isometric diagram of a 1,200 sq ft house on a 60x100 rectangle of land, dimensions included, drawn with simple straight lines.

See **Figure 9** below for the output.

I love it. Yet, I cannot use this for anything in a zoning ordinance. And in both instances, you can clearly recognize how the model is tuned for conceptual drawings. I made several more attempts to get the model to do what I wanted and quickly saw that I would spend less time, and get more useful results, by just doing the work myself.

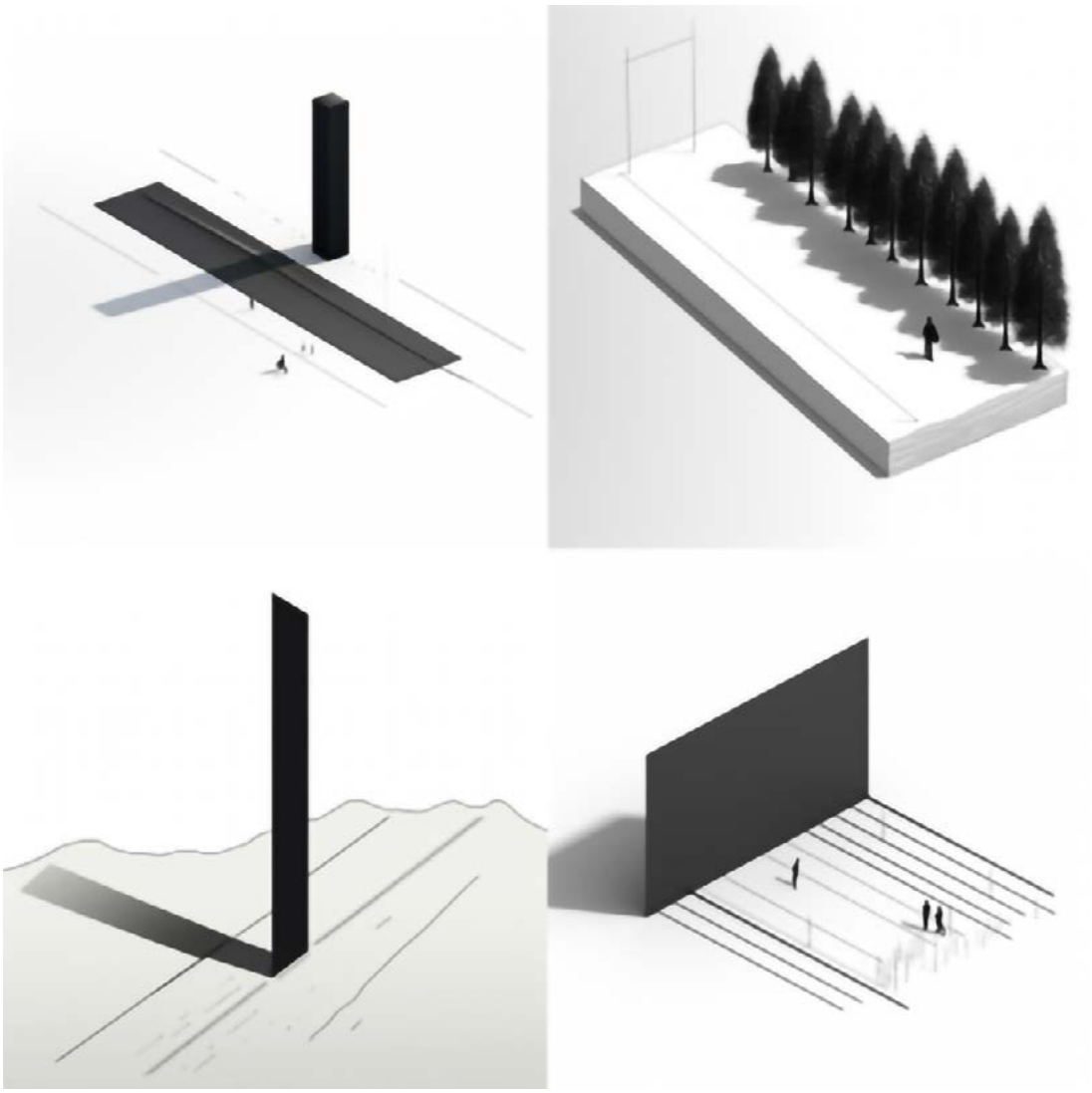
I, and many other planners, have developed "good enough" visualization skills using Adobe Creative Suite and SketchUp tools. With a little time and effort, we can all reproduce our own versions of **SmartCode**-style graphics or other technical designs. Again, in five minutes, I can have a workable, accurate graphic. In 30 minutes or less, I can have professional-grade graphics. This isn't because of my skill level; it's simply due to the fact that we don't ask for much from our technical artwork.

The Future Is Now, But Where Is It Going?

It is important to remind ourselves that we are just barely scratching the surface of what these tools can do. By the time this article is published, I will undoubtedly have better prompt patterns and a few additional tricks up my sleeve. The software, meanwhile, will likely go through several updates and improvements. I wrote this piece in August 2023. ChatGPT had three updates in that time. Midjourney had two updates.

Competing models are improving too. There are too many for me to adequately describe them all. And while each model, as a tool or product, has unique and interesting qualities, the most important innovation is coming from the rise of new platforms and exchanges designed to help the AI community build more models. In other words, we are seeing significant investment in the machines that build the machines. Not only will existing models

Figure 8. Midjourney's response to the prompt, "Simple black and white isometric diagram of a 40 foot tall, 30 foot wide, 60 foot long rectangle on a 60 foot x 100 foot rectangle of land drawn with simple straight lines."



improve; new models will rise in competition for various functions. We may be on the verge of something analogous to the Cambrian explosion that will release all manner of new, competing tools for us to pick and choose. Like other software products, we will see a few large enterprise solutions and many more independent, open-source offerings. There may soon be a few special models for planning or local governance.

Text and images are just the beginning. The most powerful AIs are the unsupervised reinforcement-learning systems that have a clear, singular goal to achieve. Like "solvers" to those familiar with the Microsoft Excel plug-ins, these AIs range from IBM's Watson to Alpha GO. These are machine learning tools built to seek the highest rewards (i.e., solving a problem) at the least cost, and they have famously outperformed the very best human talent in "closed system" games like Chess and Go. These models have even helped us map the human genome—a feat once-considered impossible. Then there is gene editing, via CRISPR, that is on a path for creating science fiction levels of medical intervention.

Could such "solver" models be applied to the urban environment? Yes. It's already happening. In the simplest form, these models coordinate signal timing for traffic control and optimize travel routes for vehicles. And if these tools can work their magic with something as dynamic as the human genome, the built environment is full of potential. With enough basic abstraction, standardized data, and a sensible set of boundaries (i.e., parameters)



Figure 9. Midjourney's response to the prompt, "Simple black and white isometric diagram of a 1,200 sq ft house on a 60x100 rectangle of land, dimensions included, drawn with simple straight lines."

to close the system, these models can also solve problems related to housing supply, emissions, and more. Simple examples already exist in the digital twins we're seeing built around the globe. This is merely the start. Deep learning models (unsupervised, reinforcement models) can eventually "solve" for any equilibrium we seek so long as we provide it sufficient data and proper parameters (see more in "**Applying Algorithms to Land-Use Decision Making**").

Much has been said about the impact generative AI tools are having in the creative arts. As a writer, I'm none-too-pleased to realize that my inimitable style is actually quite imitable. There is enough published material, and prompting capacity, for an LLM to emulate my personal rhythm of speech (er, text). I suppose I could use it to my advantage; I could have ChatGPT write this whole article. How convenient. Even so, it doesn't feel great to know that my voice, however unique it is, is just another pattern for an LLM to parse. For authors, ChatGPT is troublesome. For artists, specifically conceptual artists, MidJourney is an existential nightmare.

Thankfully, zoning practice is not a branch of the creative arts. We seek to improve the built environment with the best possible policies and administration. We should welcome any tool that helps us do that more effectively. We should also welcome any practice or approach that can improve our efforts. The advent of these generative AI tools is an inflection point for our work in the years ahead.

Effective zoning practice transcends state and local boundaries. Yet, our knowledge and tools remain too fragmented and artisanal for such a wide scope of responsibility. All our individualized confections get in the way of learning and knowledge transfer. Go to a conference and try to talk to someone about their local zoning code. You will find that certain words or concepts have to be translated from their local context to yours, or worse, you will find that some excellent policies in one place are completely absent from the next.

Despite our best efforts, zoning practice doesn't have much of a common language. It's almost as if we need to make up a giant wordcloud of all our jargon and find what the stuff we all agree upon. Then, when those concepts are defined ("missing middle" in one place differs from the next), we need to create some kind of method for using that language to form our ideas in ways that are more easily transferable across different applications.

Working from the same basic language is vital. This is why I consider SmartCode to be a triumph. As a template for form-based codes, it provides a consistent format, language, and delivery system that anyone can calibrate to their needs. More standardization, more commoditization, in the name of a refined approach is needed. This is not a radical statement. We are already halfway into such efforts. We have all engaged in some form of commoditization. There is nothing new under the sun. Every planner has copy/pasted language, standards, and numerical values from all sorts of codes. We've also pulled images from various external sources and extracted assets for our own visualizations. Generative AI has the power to help us go further in this direction, to lean into a standardized approach that coordinates and unifies our efforts in common language and standard presentation.

The power of that convenience is inescapable. Especially if it comes at a low cost. If we already know we can quickly, and more easily, deliver better policy, questions, answers, analysis, and general content through these tools, how long will we resist the temptation? More importantly, why would we even consider it a temptation in the first place? Let's lean into it together, build model codes and reports with these tools, construct model prompts, and strengthen the practice.

About the Author



Norman Wright, AICP, is the founder of Parameter, a design and analytics consultancy that specializes in creating plans, policies, and best practices for local government. Prior to this, he worked as a department director in local governments across the country. For more information, visit ParameterConsultants.com.

Cover Image:
Midjourney prompt: "Create an image that conveys a Street-Level Building Facade in a Mixed-Use Zone at ground level with a pedestrian pathway, at least two building facades (front views), one residential, one commercial, ground-floor windows and entrances, signage for the commercial unit, trees or other street vegetation, street furniture (e.g., benches, lamps), pedestrians, bicycles, and vehicles Draw this in a style that has lean lines and minimal color palette - think blueprints or architectural sketches. Use dotted lines for hypothetical dimensions or boundaries. If using shading, do so sparingly, and mainly to highlight depth or key feature. Use straight lines and symmetry to ensure a clean, technical look."

Appendix

This appendix provides the full text of Chat GPT prompts and responses cited above.

Prompt

Write a zoning policy for missing middle housing.

Chat GPT 3.5 Result

Zoning Policy for Missing Middle Housing

Purpose:
The purpose of this zoning policy is to promote the development of missing middle housing in urban and suburban areas, addressing housing affordability, diverse housing options, and neighborhood revitalization while maintaining the existing character and scale of the community.

Definition:
Missing middle housing refers to a range of medium-density residential housing types that fill the gap between single-family homes and large apartment buildings. These housing types are designed to be compatible with existing neighborhoods while providing a variety of housing options.

Zoning Regulations:

1. **Zoning Districts:** Create new or adjust existing zoning districts specifically designated for missing middle housing. These districts should allow for a mix of housing types, including duplexes, triplexes, townhouses, courtyard apartments, and cottage clusters.
2. **Density and Floor Area Ratio (FAR):** Set appropriate density limits and FAR requirements that accommodate missing middle housing while taking into account the context of the neighborhood. Density should be moderate and compatible with existing infrastructure.
3. **Lot Size and Width:** Adjust lot size and width requirements to facilitate the construction of missing middle housing units. This may involve reducing minimum lot size requirements to encourage more efficient land use.
4. **Height Limits and Setbacks:** Implement height limits and setbacks that respect the scale of the neighborhood and provide appropriate spacing between buildings to maintain privacy and daylight.
5. **Parking Requirements:** Consider reducing or eliminating parking requirements for missing middle housing developments located within close proximity to public transit nodes or areas with good walkability. This encourages the use of alternative transportation modes and reduces the cost of development.
6. **Design Guidelines:** Develop design guidelines that ensure new missing middle housing projects are compatible with the existing architectural and aesthetic character of the neighborhood. These guidelines may cover building materials, roof forms, landscaping, and other design elements.
7. **Affordability and Incentives:** Offer incentives for developers who include a certain percentage of affordable housing units within missing middle housing developments. These incentives could include expedited permitting, density bonuses, or fee reductions.
8. **Transparency and Community Engagement:** Implement a transparent approval process for missing middle housing developments, including opportunities for community input. Developers should engage with local residents to address concerns and integrate community preferences where feasible.
9. **Infrastructure and Utilities:** Ensure that infrastructure and utility capacities are adequate to accommodate the new housing units. This includes water, sewage, electricity, and roadways.
10. **Adaptive Reuse:** Allow for the adaptive reuse of existing buildings, such as old commercial structures or large single-family homes, into missing middle housing units. This promotes sustainable land use and revitalizes underutilized spaces.

Implementation:

1. **Zoning Code Update:** Amend the zoning code to incorporate the provisions outlined in this policy. Provide clear definitions, standards, and guidelines for missing middle housing types.
2. **Education and Outreach:** Conduct public workshops, informational sessions, and online resources to educate residents, developers, and local officials about the benefits and implementation of missing middle housing.
3. **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Regularly review the effectiveness of the zoning policy in promoting missing middle housing. Collect data on the number of new units created, affordability outcomes, and community feedback to make necessary adjustments.

By adopting this zoning policy for missing middle housing, the community aims to foster housing diversity, affordability, and a vibrant urban fabric while preserving the unique qualities that define the neighborhood.

Prompt

What is the ideal policy language for creating a medium-density residential zoning district that allows all housing types that are 50 feet tall or less?

Chat GPT 3.5 Result

Medium-Density Residential Zoning District for Buildings 50 Feet Tall or Less

Purpose:
The purpose of the Medium-Density Residential (MDR) Zoning District is to accommodate a variety of housing types while promoting a balanced and compatible urban environment. This district is intended to encourage diverse housing options, enhance neighborhood vitality, and ensure responsible development that respects the existing character and scale of the community.

Permitted Uses:
Within the MDR Zoning District, the following housing types are permitted:

1. Single-family detached dwellings
2. Duplexes, triplexes, and quadplexes
3. Townhouses and rowhouses
4. Courtyard apartments and garden apartments
5. Cottage clusters
6. Live-work units

Building Height:
Buildings within the MDR Zoning District shall not exceed a height of 50 feet. The height shall be measured from the average finished grade of the building footprint to the highest point of the roof, excluding necessary appurtenances such as chimneys and antennas.

Density and Floor Area Ratio (FAR):
The maximum density and FAR for the MDR Zoning District shall be determined based on comprehensive planning goals and the existing infrastructure capacity of the area. These factors shall be balanced to encourage housing diversity while maintaining appropriate scale and infrastructure support.

Lot Size and Width:
Minimum lot size and width requirements may be adjusted to allow for efficient land use while considering the compatibility of housing types with the existing neighborhood context.

Setbacks and Building Envelopes:
Setbacks shall be established to ensure adequate spacing between buildings and to provide for outdoor amenity spaces. Building envelopes may be prescribed to guide the height and massing of buildings in relation to the lot size and shape.

Parking Requirements:
Parking requirements may be reduced or eliminated for developments within the MDR Zoning District that are located in proximity to public transit nodes, exhibit good walkability, or implement alternative transportation strategies. Parking should be designed to be integrated with the development and not dominate the streetscape.

Design Guidelines:
Design guidelines shall be established to ensure that new developments in the MDR Zoning District are compatible with the character of the surrounding area. These guidelines may cover architectural style, building materials, landscaping, and other design elements.

Affordable Housing Incentives:
Developers who include a specified percentage of affordable housing units within their projects may be eligible for incentives, such as density bonuses, expedited permitting, or fee reductions.

Community Engagement:
Community engagement and public input shall be integral to the development process. Developers are encouraged to engage with local residents to address concerns and incorporate community preferences where feasible.

Implementation and Review:
The MDR Zoning District and associated regulations shall be adopted through the municipal zoning code. Regular reviews shall be conducted to assess the effectiveness of the district in achieving its goals, with adjustments made as necessary to respond to changing needs and conditions.

By creating the Medium-Density Residential Zoning District, the community seeks to provide a range of housing choices that enhance livability, affordability, and the overall quality of life for its residents.

Prompt

Create a specific, numerical standard for allowable units per acre for medium-density residential zoning.

Chat GPT 3.5 Result

Allowable Units per Acre for Medium-Density Residential Zoning
In the Medium-Density Residential (MDR) Zoning District, the allowable number of housing units per acre shall be established to promote a balanced and diverse urban environment while ensuring compatibility with existing infrastructure and neighborhood character.

Allowable Units per Acre:
The maximum allowable number of housing units per acre within the MDR Zoning District shall be set at **20 units per acre**.

This standard is intended to encourage the development of medium-density housing options that can provide a mix of housing types while preventing excessive density that might strain local infrastructure or compromise the quality of life within the neighborhood. The specific number of units per acre may be subject to adjustment based on the comprehensive planning goals of the municipality, the availability of public services, and the overall context of the area.

In cases where affordable housing is a priority, density bonuses may be considered, allowing for a modest increase in allowable units per acre for developments that include a specified percentage of affordable housing units. The decision to grant such bonuses should be guided by a clear affordable housing policy and strategy established by the local government.

Prompt

Create a specific, numerical standard for front, side, and rear building setbacks for medium-density residential zoning.

Chat GPT 3.5 Result

Building Setback Standards for Medium-Density Residential Zoning
In the Medium-Density Residential (MDR) Zoning District, building setbacks are crucial to ensure appropriate spacing between structures, provide outdoor spaces, and maintain a harmonious streetscape. The following specific numerical standards for front, side, and rear building setbacks are established to guide development within the MDR Zoning District.

Front Building Setback:
The minimum front building setback shall be **15 feet** from the front property line. This setback ensures a consistent setback line along the street, contributing to a well-defined streetscape and maintaining a comfortable pedestrian environment.

Side Building Setbacks:

- For interior side yards: The minimum side building setback shall be **5 feet** from the side property line. This allows for a sense of openness and separation between buildings, ensuring adequate daylight and privacy for adjacent properties.
- For street-facing side yards: The minimum side building setback shall be **10 feet** from the side property line adjacent to a street. This greater setback along streets helps enhance the visual quality of the streetscape.

Rear Building Setback:
The minimum rear building setback shall be **20 feet** from the rear property line. This larger setback in the rear of the property contributes to a sense of spaciousness, privacy, and the provision of outdoor spaces.

Note: The above setback standards are provided as general guidelines. Local jurisdictions may adapt these standards based on unique characteristics of the area, infrastructure considerations, and community preferences. Additionally, corner lots and irregularly shaped lots may have different setback requirements that take into account their specific context.

These setback standards aim to strike a balance between promoting a vibrant and efficient urban environment while respecting the need for privacy, open space, and a visually appealing streetscape within the Medium-Density Residential Zoning District.

Prompt

As an AICP-certified planner, explain why height restrictions of 2-3 stories to maintain a medium-density feel is important for a community.

ChatGPT 4 Result

Certainly. As an AICP-certified planner (American Institute of Certified Planners), one understands the complexity of land-use decisions and their impacts on communities. Height restrictions can play an essential role in shaping the character, function, and feel of a community. Maintaining a medium-density feel with height restrictions of 2-3 stories can be significant for the following reasons:

1. **Community Character**: Height restrictions can help preserve the existing character of a neighborhood or community. In areas with historical significance or distinctive architectural styles, maintaining a consistent scale can ensure that new developments harmonize with the existing built environment.
2. **Human Scale**: Buildings of 2-3 stories often provide a more "human-scaled" environment. This can make streets and public spaces feel more inviting, approachable, and comfortable for pedestrians. Taller buildings can sometimes overshadow streets and create a canyon effect, making spaces feel more confined.
3. **Sunlight Access**: Restricting heights ensures that more sunlight can reach street levels, benefiting pedestrians, businesses, and homes. This can be essential in promoting outdoor activities and vibrant street life. It also supports urban gardening or landscaping initiatives which rely on adequate sunlight.
4. **Privacy**: Lower buildings can help maintain a level of privacy for residents. Taller buildings can sometimes overlook neighboring properties, leading to concerns about loss of privacy.
5. **Infrastructure and Services**: Sudden increases in population density, which can occur with the introduction of high-rise buildings, can strain existing

infrastructure and services such as sewage, water, roads, and public transport. Maintaining a medium-density approach can ensure that the community grows at a manageable pace, giving the local government and service providers time to adapt.
6. **Traffic and Parking**: Medium-density developments typically generate less traffic and demand for parking compared to high-density high-rises. This can help maintain traffic flow and reduce congestion in the area.
7. **Community Cohesion**: Neighborhoods with a consistent density can foster a greater sense of community among residents. High-rises can sometimes introduce significant numbers of people into an area rapidly, which can lead to challenges in fostering community bonds and shared neighborhood identity.
8. **Economic Diversity**: Medium-density areas often support a mix of housing types, allowing for a broader range of economic diversity among residents. This can be beneficial for the social fabric of the community and local businesses.
9. **Environment**: Height restrictions can encourage more horizontal development patterns that maintain green spaces, gardens, and low-impact stormwater management practices. This can help in preserving local ecosystems and ensuring sustainable development.
10. **Safety**: In some cases, lower buildings can be safer in the event of natural disasters, like earthquakes, as they might be less vulnerable to severe structural damage compared to taller structures.

However, it's essential to recognize that each community is unique, and what works in one place might not be suitable for another. While height restrictions have their benefits, they might also limit housing supply and potentially increase housing costs in areas with high demand. Balancing community desires, environmental considerations, economic factors, and housing needs is a critical aspect of the planning process.

Prompt

As an AICP-certified planner, explain why height restrictions of 2-3 stories to maintain a medium-density feel is important for a community. Write the answer in a way that is understandable to audiences with a 6th-grade reading level.

ChatGPT 4 Result

Of course! Let's break this down into simpler terms:

1. **Look and Feel**: Imagine a neighborhood like a puzzle where all the pieces fit well together. If we suddenly put tall buildings everywhere, it would be like forcing pieces from another puzzle into it. Keeping buildings at 2-3 stories helps the neighborhood keep its special look.
2. **Friendly Streets**: Shorter buildings make streets feel friendly and open. When buildings are too tall, streets can feel like they're in shadows, making them less cozy and inviting.
3. **Sunshine**: With shorter buildings, more sunlight can shine down on streets, parks, and homes. This is good for playing outside, gardening, and enjoying the outdoors.
4. **Privacy**: Imagine living in a home and having a super tall building next door. People in that building could look into your home easily. Shorter buildings help everyone have more privacy.
5. **Traffic**: Shorter buildings mean fewer people living in a small area, which can lead to less traffic and easier parking.
6. **Community**: In neighborhoods with buildings that are all about the same height, people might find it easier to get to know each other and feel like they belong.
7. **Safety**: In some places, shorter buildings can be safer during things like earthquakes.
8. *Green Space**: With shorter buildings, there's often more room for trees, gardens, and parks.

In short, having buildings that are 2-3 stories tall can help keep a neighborhood feeling friendly, sunny, and comfortable for everyone. It's like making sure all the puzzle pieces fit just right!

Prompt

I would like you to ask me questions about how city planning can resolve the housing affordability crisis.

ChatGPT 4 Result

Of course! Let's dive into this topic:

1. **Basics**: How do you believe city planning directly impacts housing affordability?
2. **Zoning**: In your opinion, how can zoning reforms or changes contribute to making housing more affordable?
3. **Density**: How do you feel about increasing housing density, such as allowing more apartment buildings, as a solution to the affordability crisis?
4. **Incentives**: What kind of incentives do you think cities can offer developers to build more affordable housing?
5. **Land**: Considering that land availability is often a constraint, how can city planners utilize city-owned land or underutilized spaces to address housing affordability?
6. **Infrastructure**: How important is the role of infrastructure, like public transportation, in making housing more affordable in different parts of a city?

7. **Historical Preservation**: How can cities balance the need to preserve historical neighborhoods and buildings with the need to provide more affordable housing?
8. *Community Engagement**: How can city planners ensure that community voices are heard and incorporated when trying to address housing affordability?
9. **Innovative Solutions**: Are there any novel or out-of-the-box housing solutions you've encountered that you believe could alleviate the affordability crisis?
10. **Regulations**: Do you believe that reducing certain building regulations or streamlining the permit process can lead to more affordable housing?
11. **Rent Control**: What's your stance on rent control policies, and how do they fit into the broader strategy of ensuring housing affordability?
12. **Mixed-Use Development**: How can incorporating mixed-use developments, where residential and commercial spaces coexist, influence housing prices?
13. **Comparative Analysis**: Are there specific cities or countries you think have successfully tackled the housing affordability issue through city planning? If so, what lessons can we draw from them?
14. **Future Proofing**: With the anticipation of population growth and urban migration, how should city planners prepare today to ensure housing remains affordable in the future?
15. **Economic Impacts**: How do you see the relationship between housing affordability, local businesses, and the overall health of a city's economy?

I'm eager to hear your thoughts and insights on these topics!

Prompt

Create a missing middle zoning policy document for me. I am going to provide a template for your output. CAPITALIZED WORDS are my placeholders for content. Try to fit the output into one or more of the placeholders that I list. Please preserve the formatting and overall template that I provide. This is the template: POLICY TITLE, USES ALLOWED, USES PROHIBITED, MAXIMUM DENSITY, PARKING MINIMUMS, FRONT SETBACKS, SIDE SETBACKS, REAR SETBACKS, FLOOR AREA RATIO MAXIMUM, LANDSCAPING REQUIREMENTS, TRANSPARENCY REQUIREMENTS, LIGHTING REQUIREMENTS, ARCHITECTURE GUIDELINES.

ChatGPT 4 Result

Sure, I'll draft a "Missing Middle" zoning policy document based on the template you provided. The "Missing Middle" typically refers to housing types that fall between single-family homes and large apartment complexes, such as townhouses, duplexes, and small apartment buildings. Here's a potential draft:

POLICY TITLE:
Missing Middle Housing Zoning Policy

USES ALLOWED:
- Duplexes, Triplexes, and Fourplexes
- Townhouses and Row Houses
- Courtyard Apartments
- Live-work spaces
- Small Apartment Buildings (up to 12 units)
- Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)
- Cluster housing

USES PROHIBITED:
- Single-family detached homes on large lots
- Large apartment complexes (greater than 12 units)
- Commercial-only buildings
- Industrial uses

MAXIMUM DENSITY:
25 dwelling units per acre

PARKING MINIMUMS:
- 0.5 spaces per unit for duplexes, triplexes, and fourplexes
- 1 space per unit for townhouses and apartment buildings
- No parking required for ADUs

FRONT SETBACKS:
10 feet (flexible for pedestrian-friendly design)

SIDE SETBACKS:
5 feet

REAR SETBACKS:
15 feet

FLOOR AREA RATIO MAXIMUM:
1.5 (this allows for more built space relative to the lot size, supporting denser housing types)

LANDSCAPING REQUIREMENTS:
- Minimum of 20% of lot area to be landscaped
- At least one tree per dwelling unit
- Native and drought-tolerant plantings encouraged

TRANSPARENCY REQUIREMENTS:
- Ground floor residential units should have a minimum of 20% window or door transparency on the primary facade
- Non-residential or mixed-use ground floor should have a minimum of 60% transparency on the primary facade

LIGHTING REQUIREMENTS:
- Shielded or downlit outdoor lighting to prevent light spill into adjacent properties
- Pedestrian-scale lighting encouraged along walkways

ARCHITECTURE GUIDELINES:
- Designs should complement the neighborhood's character and scale
- Variety in facade treatments, materials, and colors is encouraged to promote diversity and visual interest
- Roofs may be flat or pitched, but large, unbroken expanses of any facade are discouraged

---
This policy document provides a foundation for the development of "Missing Middle" housing types, but remember, any policy should be tailored to the specific needs, character, and goals of a particular community.

Prompt
Write an adoption ordinance for establishing a missing middle policy in the City of Cascadia, Oregon.

ChatGPT 4 Result
Certainly! Here's a draft for an adoption ordinance for a missing middle policy in the City of Cascadia, Oregon:

CITY OF CASCADIA, OREGON
ADOPTION ORDINANCE No. 2023-45

AN ORDINANCE of the City of Cascadia, Oregon, adopting a Missing Middle Housing Zoning Policy to support diverse housing choices, promote affordability, and maintain neighborhood character.

WHEREAS, the City of Cascadia recognizes the need for a diverse range of housing choices to accommodate all residents;

WHEREAS, Missing Middle Housing provides a solution to address the gap between single-family homes and large apartment complexes, offering affordability and design compatibility;

WHEREAS, the Missing Middle Housing Zoning Policy aligns with the city's comprehensive plan, housing goals, and growth strategies;

WHEREAS, public engagement sessions have demonstrated community support for more diverse housing choices and emphasized the importance of design that is compatible with the character of Cascadia;

NOW, THEREFORE, the City Council of the City of Cascadia ordains as follows:

SECTION 1. ADOPTION
The Missing Middle Housing Zoning Policy, as attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference, is hereby adopted and made part of the Cascadia Municipal Code.

SECTION 2. IMPLEMENTATION
City staff shall update the zoning map, land use tables, and relevant sections of the Cascadia Municipal Code to be consistent with the provisions of the Missing Middle Housing Zoning Policy.

SECTION 3. SEVERABILITY
If any portion of this ordinance is for any reason held to be invalid or unconstitutional by any court of competent jurisdiction, such portion shall be deemed a separate, distinct, and independent provision, and such holding shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions of this ordinance.

SECTION 4. EFFECTIVE DATE
This ordinance shall take effect 30 days after its passage by the City Council and approval by the Mayor.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the City Council of the City of Cascadia this __ day of ___, 2023.

APPROVED by the Mayor of the City of Cascadia this __ day of ___, 2023.

[City Mayor's Name]
Mayor, City of Cascadia
ATTEST:
[City Clerk's Name]
City Clerk, City of Cascadia

This ordinance serves as a foundational document for the Missing Middle Housing Policy in the City of Cascadia. Regular reviews and community engagement are essential to ensure its effectiveness and alignment with the city's evolving needs.

Prompt
Write the enabling legislation that will allow the City of Cascadia, Oregon to implement a missing middle housing policy.

ChatGPT 4 Result
Certainly! Enabling legislation is a piece of legislation that gives lower-level governments (like cities) the authority to implement policy changes. Here's a draft for an enabling legislation that will allow the City of Cascadia, Oregon, to implement a missing middle housing policy:

STATE OF OREGON
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

ENABLING LEGISLATION 2023-OR-255

AN ACT relating to housing; granting cities the authority to implement missing middle housing policies; and prescribing an effective date.

Be It Enacted by the People of the State of Oregon:

SECTION 1. FINDINGS
The Legislative Assembly finds:
(a) That diverse housing choices are essential to accommodate all residents of Oregon.
(b) That many cities, including Cascadia, are experiencing a housing affordability crisis.
(c) That "Missing Middle" housing types offer affordability, sustainability, and design that's compatible with existing neighborhoods.
(d) That empowering cities to implement these housing strategies can provide solutions to housing challenges while preserving local character.

SECTION 2. AUTHORIZATION
(a) Any city in the State of Oregon, including the City of Cascadia, is hereby authorized and empowered to develop, adopt, revise, or amend missing middle housing policies.
(b) Such policies may regulate, among other things: types of housing, zoning, density, design standards, setbacks, and parking requirements.
(c) Cities may, as they see fit, offer incentives or grants to promote the development of missing middle housing.

SECTION 3. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
Cities are encouraged to engage in comprehensive community consultation and input when crafting and implementing missing middle housing policies, ensuring the voices of residents are represented and considered.

SECTION 4. REVIEW AND REPORTING
(a) Cities that implement a missing middle housing policy under this Act shall conduct a review of the policy's impact at least once every five years.
(b) Findings of such reviews, along with any relevant data regarding housing affordability, diversity, and development, shall be reported to the State of Oregon Department of Housing and Urban Development.

SECTION 5. STATE SUPPORT
The State of Oregon Department of Housing and Urban Development shall provide technical assistance, resources, and guidance to cities looking to adopt or amend missing middle housing policies.

SECTION 6. SEVERABILITY
If any section, subsection, provision, or part of this Act is for any reason held to be invalid or unconstitutional, such decision shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions of this Act.

SECTION 7. EFFECTIVE DATE
This Act shall take effect 90 days after its passage into law.

PASSED in the Senate and House of Representatives of the State of Oregon this __ day of ___, 2023.

APPROVED by the Governor of the State of Oregon this __ day of ___, 2023.

This enabling legislation provides the necessary framework and authority for the City of Cascadia and other Oregon cities to craft and execute missing middle housing policies that suit their individual needs and contexts.

American Planning Association

Creating Great Communities for All

ZONING PRACTICE OCTOBER 2023 | VOL. 40, NO. 10. Zoning Practice (ISSN 1548–0135) is a monthly publication of the American Planning Association. Joel Albizo, FASAE, CAE, Chief Executive Officer; Petra Hurtado, PHD, Research Director; David Morley, AICP, Editor. Subscriptions are available for $65 (individuals) and $120 (organizations). © 2023 by the American Planning Association, 205 N. Michigan Ave., Suite 1200, Chicago, IL 60601–5927; planning.org. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or utilized in any form or by any means without permission in writing from APA.